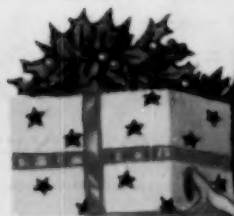


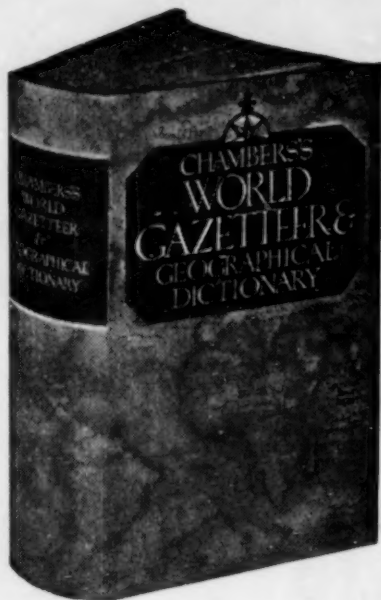
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SOLUTION

ACROSS: 3, Mains; 8, Coffee; 9, Muffle; 10, Albino; 11, Roulette (anag.); 12, Due; 13, Cerise; 14, Schiedam (anag.); 17, Bausond (*The Two Dogs*, 31); 19, Alsatia; 23, Schnapps (anag.); 27, Vernal (M-alvern); 29, Tee; 30, Usquebae (*Tam o' Shanter*, 108); 31, Nobler; 32, Bushel; 33, Estate; 34, Endor (anag.).

DOWN: 1, Collie (*The Two Dogs*, 23); 2, Effigies (anag.); 3, Melodeon (ode, melon); 4, Imprest; 5, Smouch; 6, Effete; 7, Elytra (hidden); 13, Cebus (anag.); 15, Ids (hidden); 16, Myall; 18, Ova; 20, Lavender (anag.); 21, Acrobats; 22, Asterid (anag.); 24, Cestus; 25, Naught; 26, Pebble; 28, Amenta.

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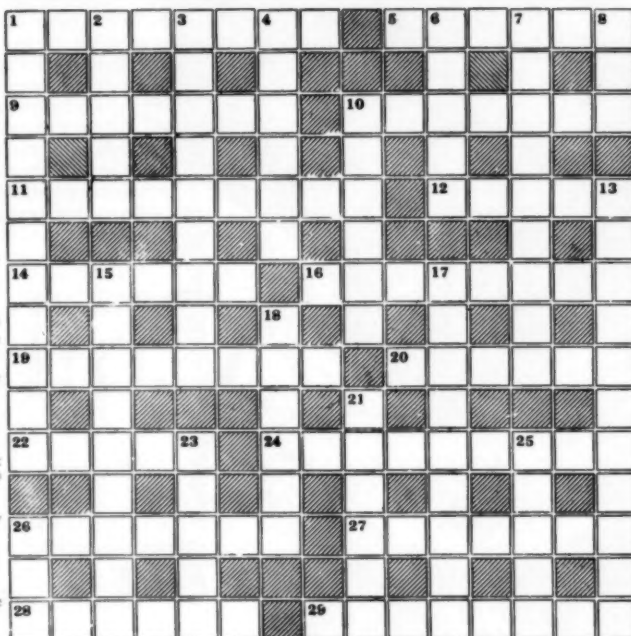
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CHAMBERS'S DICTIONARY

CROSSWORD No. 8

ACROSS

- 1 This winged fighter battles on the ground (two words: 4, 4).
- 5 There may be cricket here, but no Test Match (6).
- 9 Former demand to ejaculate (7).
- 10 A bob to drink—dotty (7).
- 11 The people who were recently united (9).
- 12 Hangings in clear raspberry (5).
- 14 Sound of good cheer (6).
- 16 Should the verb which begins this changeling be 'was' ? (8).
- 19 Figures showing Fig. 1 at centre (8).
- 20 Petition (6).
- 22 Cited a decree (5).
- 24 Bring gnats (anag.). But wouldn't they fall through ? (two words: 6, 3).
- 26 Pardon—or what the broody hen might say ? (7).
- 27 Works at last (7).
- 28 She's wild ! (6).
- 29 General smog effect—the 8 down of 26 down (8).



Composed by JOAN BENYON

13

DOWN

- 1 According to nursery legend, a mouldy lunar ingredient (two words: 5, 6).
- 2 Scottish bird ? (5).
- 3 Possibly an asylum working party (two words: 5, 4).
- 4 Motor round order on an incline (6).
- 6 She came to stay (5).
- 7 Changing programme with conservative end (9).
- 8 Cry after this (3).
- 10 To be addressed thus in U.S. does not imply relationship (6).

DOWN (contd.)

- 13 They fought in a non-militant way (11).
- 15 No frills about this kind of conduct, despite starting frill (9).
- 17 Mistake and youth to deliver the goods (two words: 6, 3).
- 18 Bovine island garment (6).
- 21 Dealer who may employ 17 down (6).
- 23 Nice perception (5).
- 25 Nautical rubbish (5).
- 26 Dust from tree ? (3).

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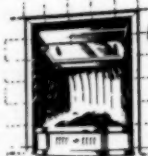
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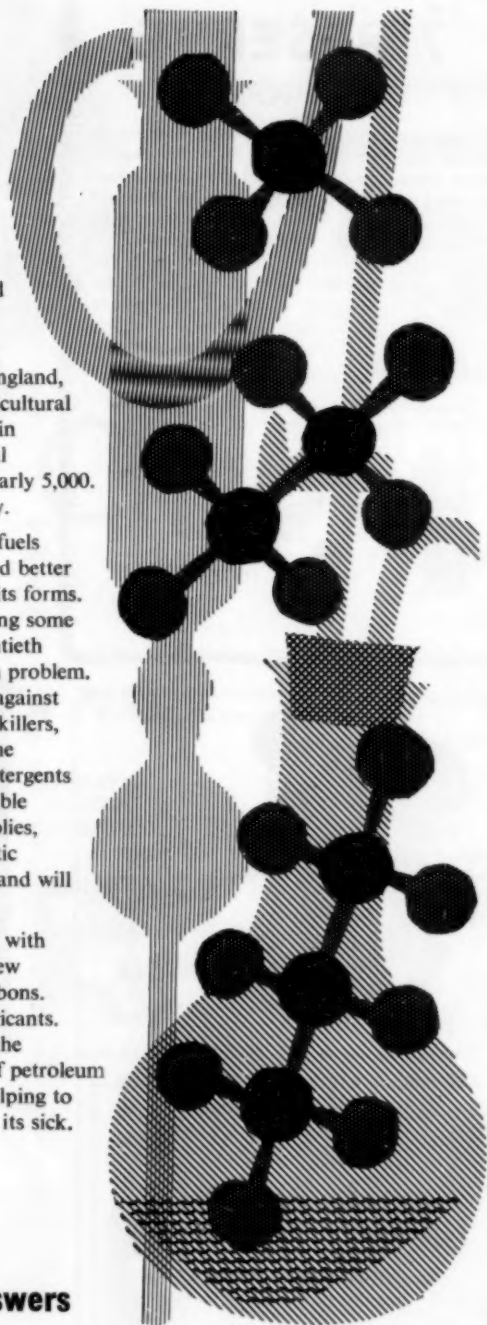
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Inconstant Star

MARGARET COUSINS

CANADA BUTLER, not being philosopher, king, or keeper of any kind of flock, was more embarrassed than anything else when he saw the star in the December dusk. It made him nervous, blazing in the winter sky, where it never had been before, diminishing if not wiping out the constellations he had learned by rote. It spoiled his sales story, and that was about all Canada had left. Wasn't it bad enough to stand on a concrete island in the middle of Times Square and hawk a telescope at twenty-five cents a look, without having some yokel ask you a question you couldn't answer?

From the beginning, Canada hadn't felt right about the telescope. It had been a comedown for him—not subtle enough for his talents—it was like selling tickets for the merry-go-round. He was no stranger to blue sky, but he'd never thought to catch himself selling patches of it for a quarter. Well, a man has to make concessions in this world, do what he can get to do.

When the Little Marvel Touring Shows polished off the last of the dusty county fairs and holed up in Linton, Ohio, for the winter, Canada began to feel restless. He liked to keep moving, but the outlook for a carnival

man is not heartening anywhere when the snow flies. He ought to be made like a bear, to hibernate when winter comes on, because the tired tinsel of his profession belongs to summer starlight and the harvest moon. Nobody needs a barker in December.

Towns like Linton depressed Canada. He had come from such a town, where the oaks and maples shed their leaves over low rooftops, and hens scratched and clucked in the backyards, and there was always a passel of kids and a pack of dogs trotting around on aimless errands. They turned off the lights at eight o'clock in Linton. Even the pool hall was deserted, and there wasn't any place to go, unless you counted the Chili Parlor, where some of the carnival folks gathered to play checkers. Checkers!

The girl situation wasn't promising, either. There were plenty of girls, but they looked neat and prim and innocent, as if they were still in high school or had two-fisted steadies or husbands or an old man who dropped his shoes meaningfully in the upstairs bedroom at nine o'clock.

Canada, who once had been the husband of a girl in Meadow Lakes, Minnesota, and the father of a baby girl, felt claustrophobia

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creeping over him in Linton, Ohio—a smothering sensation. When he saw people ambling home at dark or smelled somebody's dinner cooking, he wanted to cut and run, to get out of Linton and into a place where something exciting was happening.

There was also the matter of small change. It wouldn't have been sensible to ply any of his usual sideline trades in winter quarters where the chances of moving on were remote; and Canada never had been on friendly terms with manual labour. Let the weight-lifter hire out at the local coal and grain emporium as a coal-heaver and the snake-charmer measure ribbon in the notions store; Canada was dedicated to living by his wits. The day old man Bascom handed him a paintbrush and a bucket of red enamel and nodded toward the mud-splattered wagons, Canada made up his mind. He packed his things in his old canvas valise and headed for New York.

CANADA had a little money—percentage of the summer take and result of a fortunate poker hand—but he rode in the day coach. In spite of posted warnings to beware of professional card-sharps, Canada managed a few hours of successful seven-up with some downy service men and ran his money up to about \$250. The future looked bright, because everybody knows there are more hicks in New York than anywhere else. Show them the shell game, and they'll buy it. It seemed to Canada he was now in a fair way to get rich.

After about twenty-four hours of being stunned by the overpowering masonry of the city and the turgidity of its streets, Canada decided to make some contacts. A mild-looking, moonfaced fellow he met in a pinball alley on Fifty-second Street was his first contact. His name was Bert, and he fleeced Canada out of his capital by one of the hoariest dodges known to the business. Canada, chagrined at finding himself a greenhorn in the Big Time, became not only poverty-stricken but wary. New York seemed to be slightly ahead of the medicine-show circuit.

Canada was reduced rapidly to guest of the city and began to take handouts from the brown monks on Thirty-third Street. The first snows were beginning to fall, and he hadn't even the fifty cents requisite for a flop-house at night. Sleeping in the subway

or a railroad station got less and less restful. There was work to be had; but Canada had no liking for the bonds of business. He was lonely for the pitch, for the circle of eager faces, slack-mouthed, wide-eyed, bent on him, with tense concentration, for the build-up and the pay-off when he played on the crowd as if it were an instrument, and for the crescendo of falling silver.

'Step a little closer, folks! Draw in. Right over here, sister. Would you let the lady through, sir? I want everybody to get a good chance to see our splendid offering, because I haven't got the words to describe it, folks. I'd have to be a regular poet. Yes, I would! Get away, boy! Now, folks, for only ten cents, one tenth of a dollar, a measly little thin dime, two buffalo nickels, ten copper cents, folks—'

But Canada lacked the splendid offering. The war had been hard on the handy can-openers and shoddy knives with which you could whittle potatoes into useless daisies, make curls of simple carrots and fringe of honest celery. Nobody imported these wizened roots from China, which, if you put them in water and let them stay six months, might sprout a few woody tentacles of green, and might not—but by that time you would be far away. Even the magic hair lotions ('Will make curls out of the straightest hair!') and the tonic elixirs ('Good for every ill of man or beast!') had disappeared.

CANADA was lonesome and homesick. But how can a man who is homeless be homesick? Canada asked himself, and he tried to think back twenty years to Meadow Lakes, Minnesota, where he had sold groceries for Ephraim Bros. and gone home at night to a four-room house and a wife called Dorothy and a baby they had named Marjorie. Dorothy had brown hair and soft eyes, and the baby was fat and comical. The house was bare, but Dorothy had fixed it up with rag rugs and curtains and sewed some patchwork quilts for bedspreads. He remembered one Christmas she made a tree; tugged an evergreen from the woods and decked it with strings of popcorn and those paper-chains kids make in school.

The baby's white sock had looked little and funny hanging there by the old black stove—funny and pitiful. It was enough to break a man.

But mostly it seemed to him Dorothy had been trying to get him to do something he didn't want to do, like fix the gate, and the baby had squalled a lot.

It couldn't be Meadow Lakes he was homesick for. He had left it without a qualm. He remembered that night when Dorothy said she simply had to have some money, the baby needed a coat before winter set in, and had he ordered the cordwood, and for heaven's sake couldn't he do something about the front-door, which was sagging and wouldn't lock? It was raining, and wet diapers were hanging on a rope behind the kitchen-stove, and Dorothy had a cold. To get out of the house, he went to the drugstore to buy a packet of cigarettes, and while he was lounging around there, his month's pay heavy in his pocket, the night express came through, bound for Minneapolis. For no reason especially clear to him, he got on it.

He was one of those men who never come back from a nocturnal walk to the drugstore, but disappear and find themselves a new, if no more satisfactory, life. Of all the men who, in the slough of domesticity, sometimes consider such rashness, Canada was one of the few who escaped.

At first he had some fantastic notion of getting rich quickly and returning in splendour to reclaim his wife and child. But the way to easy riches was no simpler to Canada than it is to stronger characters, and his years were spent on the downward path. When an ordinary man would have given up hope and after a few bouts with questionable oil stock and phony gold-mining certificates would have gone back to work, Canada still followed the gleam. His looks and charm and lack of stamina conspired against him.

He sold everything from bogus stocks and bonds and racing tips to hula performances, and though he had lived, he could not be said to have prospered. As the years ran by, his ability to associate himself with Big Time operators diminished and he deteriorated into a barker. He was still the handsomest barker on the small town circuits, and his voice had the come-hither of a Pied Piper's.

Inevitably the memory of Meadow Lakes had dimmed, until he was hardly able to conjure up the outlines of it or to fancy himself among its citizenry. The twinges he at first experienced concerning the plight of Dorothy lessened, until in his memory her face was merely a blur.

No, it couldn't be Meadow Lakes he was homesick for, Canada thought; but his malaise was genuine, and it occurred to him that if he had a home, it was the carnival. But his last carnival, hunkered down now in Linton, was as remote from him as the moon. If he started out to hitch, he never could make it by Christmas. Besides, Canada hated exercise.

IT was quite by accident that Canada ran into Pearl McCready, the wife of one of his old friends from the Peerless Midway Associates—a group he had travelled with more than ten years before. Joel McCready had had a marvellous racket—all he had done was to let people look through a giant telescope he had acquired in a shady deal with a pawnbroker, charge so much a look, and speak some gibberish about the constellations. The people had eaten it up. They had loved it. And more than once Canada Butler had envied him his livelihood.

Asking immediately after his old friend, Canada learned from Pearl McCready that he was dead—killed six months before by a truck he thought he could bluff out of a right of way. And the giant telescope was dead, too, so far as Pearl McCready, widow, was concerned. She had not yet got around to selling it, but she was through with midways—already she was going steady with a restaurateur, who owned a place on Ninth Avenue. Why didn't Canada take on the telescope? Obviously Canada wasn't doing anything now. Sure, take it over, the book *Simplified Astronomy* and all, and pay her when he got around to it.

Canada guessed quickly that this generous gesture was simply a means Pearl McCready had for salving her conscience—by giving the telescope to one of Joel's old pals she needn't feel so bad about forgetting Joel in such a hurry and getting hitched to a city bloke. So Canada had no compunction about accepting the deal, and it was arranged without a thought on his part of ever paying.

CANADA'S first night on Times Square was a great success. He set up the telescope on the island that supported the bronze statue of Father Duffy at the intersection of Broadway and Seventh Avenue, and out of the rivers of people a sufficient number paused

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to stand and listen to Canada's impassioned advertising of the heavenly bodies.

The ring of bemused faces, surrounding him once more, hanging on his words, drove him to flights of oratory; and the public was soon standing in line. Canada, who hardly had mastered the mechanical adjustment of the telescope, gave them brief looks at the sky, only slightly magnified by the cheap lenses of the instrument, and briefer lectures on the constellations, which he still could not locate, with or without the telescope.

Airily he asked every woman her birth date and then identified her with any star he could see through the telescope. When he observed with what avidity they listened, he raised the price from ten cents to twenty-five. At midnight he had ten dollars.

Canada was stunned. He retrieved his valise from a cloakroom in Pennsylvania Station, got himself a hotel room, and had ham and eggs for breakfast the next morning. Later in the day he had a cardboard sign painted: 'Professor C. Butler, Astronomer. Learn the Secrets of the Heavens.' He bought a white shirt and a black knit tie and began to take on an academic demeanour.

Meanwhile, the Christmas multitudes swarmed in the Square, mashing the sooty snow underfoot, jostling one another in the high fettle of holiday cheer. The animated signs twinkled and glowed. The mammoth head on a cigarette billboard puffed artificial smoke-rings toward the Astor Hotel; ridiculous showers of glycerine bubbles drifted heavenward from a soap advertisement; steam escaped from a cup of neon coffee. The roar and grind of traffic competed with the blare of carols from radio amplifiers.

Canada, who never had looked higher than the clock on top of the Paramount Building, found himself staring into the depths of the cold, pure sky of a winter's night and wondering. He hardly had looked at the sky since he'd left Minnesota; but now, as he gazed at the infinite meadows of heaven, he began to have a curious feeling that somewhere in it a sign was set for him. He didn't like it. It gave him the creeps.

He was surprised at how pretty things looked up there, almost the way he remembered they looked in Meadow Lakes when he was a boy courting Dorothy. He recalled one night when they were in her father's sleigh, with the bells ringing in the thin, light air, and it seemed to him the stars were

hanging down on stems, right over his head. The telescope reminded him of that. And the night Marjorie was born. He didn't know what to do with himself. He went out in the below-zero weather and stood there, gritting his teeth and looking at heaven and making demanding prayers.

ONE night a little past the middle of December Canada was standing on his Times Square island about seven-thirty, whistling as he waited for the crowds that soon would assemble. Absently he adjusted the telescope and squinted into it. He drew back and looked again. In the circumscribed circle of the lens, on a field of midnight blue, there blazed a golden thing. Canada shook his head, then glued his eye to the telescope, for he supposed he was suffering from hallucination. But it was still there, serene and golden, bigger and brighter than any star he ever had seen. 'Where'd that come from?' he muttered, and began to thumb through his astronomy book. In the indifferent light he could not find a map that included such a spectacular heavenly body. He blinked and looked to the northwest with his naked eyes; but there was not a glimmer of golden light, and the fixed constellations moved on in their accustomed courses. 'Well, I'll be hanged!' Canada said.

At first he felt unreasonably elated. This would wow them—a brand-new star at Christmas, sailing northwest of Times Square. Wait until he got that into the spiel! But when he opened his mouth to announce his discovery, he changed his mind. A small, cold chill ran down his back, and he didn't want to utter a word. Who was he to say there was a new star above the confused and weary world at Christmas? He didn't know anything about it. He'd better keep quiet.

People had begun to press around the telescope. Canada launched his piece; but his heart wasn't in it. As he droned on, he found that he was worrying. 'Somebody is going to ask me about what it is or what it means,' he thought. 'And I don't know.'

'Twenty-five cents for a look through this powerful telescope,' he ended. 'Only a quarter, the fourth part of a dollar, to learn the secrets of the heavenly bodies.'

The crowd surged up. He adjusted the telescope, moved the sights down, and held his breath. As he swung it round, he waited

for their outcries; but nothing happened. They paid their money, and they took their glimpses, and they went away satisfied and unmoved. Canada stared at them. He couldn't believe it. He wished they would go home so he himself could look through the telescope. But business was wonderful. Long after midnight they were still coming up. At last there was only a kid left, a boy about sixteen, and Canada was so shaken that he let the boy fool with the sights and swing the telescope on its pivot. Finally, he said: 'Say, bub, do you see a kind of bright gold star over there—sort of to the northwest?'

The boy swung the instrument around and pointed it to the northwest. 'Nope.'

'Look again,' Canada said. 'Here, let me fix the sights.' Then: 'Now, right over there.'

'I don't see anything.'

Canada shrugged. 'Okay,' he said.

As the boy moved off, Canada squinted through the lens. There it swam, radiant in its field of blue, refracting long rays.

'I must be losing my mind,' Canada thought. 'If it's there, anybody ought to be able to see it—they couldn't help it. If it's not there, how can I see it?'

CANADA folded the telescope and scuttled toward the hotel. He felt peculiar. Once before there had been a star not everybody saw, or at least a star not many people paid the proper attention to.

'But a thing like that couldn't happen to a man like me,' Canada scoffed. 'Not educated or smart or important. I don't know anything and I don't amount to anything. I'm not even honest.'

Having made this remarkable admission, Canada was struck by a bolt of remorse that kept him sleepless. Crowds of people he had cheated rose up around him in his small hotel room and looked at him with trusting faces. It was their looks of trust that undid him. He would have preferred these phantom faces to be distorted with menace or anger or hatred. But they looked kind and confident. Somewhere among them were the faces of Dorothy and the baby, and he had to shake himself to remember that the baby wasn't a baby any more. She must be about nineteen years old. So the whole thing was silly.

As he alternately paced the floor and tossed and turned in his bed, it seemed to him that he must begin to make restitution for the

means he had taken of earning a livelihood. Otherwise he might never get to sleep. He thought of Dorothy and the baby; but it was so long ago, and perhaps the kindest thing he ever had done had been to leave Dorothy. Maybe she had figured out a decent life for herself, and Marjorie probably didn't know that her father was a carnival barker. Maybe she was in college, and if she found out, it would embarrass her. He wondered what she looked like—whether she was blonde like him or dark like her mother—and if she were tall and if she were happy.

But he couldn't start there. He had waited too long. If you begin at the beginning, you never finish. On the other hand, if you begin at the end and work back, you might get there someday before you died.

AFTER that night Canada approached the telescope gingerly, as if it might be alive or an instrument of the devil. But it was inanimate and cold. Not knowing what else to do with himself, he set it up at the accustomed stand, determined not to look into it. But the urge to see whether or not the new star was still there overcame him, and he adjusted the lens and looked. Serene and golden, the star floated in the circumscribed circle. Canada shut his eyes. He shut his mind, too, and began to warm up to his patter; but he couldn't come out with it. Somewhere between yesterday and to-day he had lost his knack. His voice was hoarse and he couldn't think of anything to say. Trade fell off, and most of the time Canada stood by his telescope like a wooden Indian, not saying anything, just waiting for destiny to overtake him.

He was relieved that a heavy snowfall obscured the sky the following night, and he stayed in his room. Feverishly he looked through astronomy charts for some hint of his find; but nothing explained it. When he had finished his research, he sat with his head in his hands, wondering what he ought to do.

A week dragged by in this manner, and Canada began to lose weight. He did not seem to be in command of his life, but at the mercy of unknown direction, and he dreaded for day to break or night to fall. It would have been in keeping with his character to take to his heels. It had been his lifelong method to run when the going got heavy; but an iron will, not recognisable as his, seemed to have welded him to Times Square.

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When the snow stopped and the skies cleared, he automatically dragged himself to his stand and set up the telescope and his sign. He took a first look. The large star winked back at him. He shuddered down his long, brawny length and decided he had taken leave of his senses. He stood silently beside the telescope, waiting for somebody to notice it. A few people sauntered over, and a man with two children, a boy and a girl, bought each child a look. Canada rumbled out his lecture, but the fire was gone from him. The little girl clung to her father's hand, and Canada found himself affected by the sight. He felt like crying and was afraid he might do some such fool thing.

He didn't know why the sight of a little girl clinging to her father's hand should so impress him. She was a prissy kid, with yellow pigtails and two front teeth missing, not what you'd call pretty. But it was something about the way she hung on to her old man, leaned against him and impeded his walk, and the look on her face when she turned her head up to him—a kind of he-belongs-to-me look. Marjorie hadn't been big enough to hang on to Canada's hand; but if he had stayed around, one day she might have put her little paw in his and looked at him like that. That was really what he wanted, Canada thought. Somebody to look at him as if he mattered.

But it was too late now. Marjorie wasn't a kid any more. He hoped suddenly that Marjorie was having a wonderful life—a sort of heaven-on-earth life. He hoped she had a good home, and lovely clothes to wear, and a young man she loved who soon would begin to devote himself to her for ever.

'I can't stand it,' Canada moaned. 'I can't stand any more of it.'

It was a bitter night, and the crowd thinned early; but still he stayed there. Now and then he took a fearful look at the imperturbable thing that had become the centre of his limited universe. The wind howled coldly around the corners, and his fingers were almost too stiff to adjust the telescope sights; but he waited. A superstitious notion had come into his head that he must wait—that something important was about to happen.

AROUND one o'clock in the morning a man and a girl came across the vacant street to Canada's island, and they stood there shivering, waiting for the traffic-light to

change. Canada studied the girl's face— young and shallow and a little frightened. She had a floss of light, silky hair, which blew about in the cold wind, and her shabby reefer covered some kind of party dress, a poor red thing with rhinestones on the skirt. She wasn't wearing gloves, and Canada surmised that she hadn't a pair that matched her dress and pride had sent her out bare-handed. On her thin wrist was a cheap and sparkling bracelet. Canada yearned toward her, as someone a little like himself a long time ago, someone who loved bright sparkling things and because she couldn't get real things was willing to settle for imitations. She looked about twenty.

The man with her was more than twice her age. 'About my age,' Canada thought. 'Old enough to be her father!' He was a thick-chested, dark man, a bit too sleek, and he wore a well-cut overcoat and a good soft hat, but his face was mean. It was an ugly face with hard eyes.

'Robbing the cradle!' Canada muttered.

The girl turned and looked at him with her wide blue eyes. 'Oh, look, Ed,' she said. 'It's a telescope—for looking at the stars.'

'Who wants to look at the stars?'

'I do, Ed. Please, Ed,' she said.

'Come on, baby. I'll show you some stars,' the man said.

Canada was outraged. He almost forgot his troubles in his distrust of this situation. The girl looked at him with silent pleading, as if she wanted to delay their progress and was using him as an excuse. He saw that she was frightened. He had to do something.

In the empty square he began his story. It all came back to him unbidden. His voice soared on the still air, ingratiating, coaxing, magnetising.

Ed was impressed in spite of himself. 'Okay,' he said to the girl.

She bent her light head and fitted the telescope to her eye. Canada began his lecture tonelessly, swivelling the instrument for her as he talked.

'Oh, what's that one?' she interrupted. 'That big gold one over there?'

'Where?' Canada demanded, his hair rising.

'Over there!' she said. 'To the northwest. It's wonderful!'

'Do you see it too?' Canada whispered.

She straightened up and looked at him in astonishment. 'Well, of course! It blots out everything else.'

'Honest?' Canada said. 'You can see it? Well, maybe the only people who see it are the ones who need to see it!'

'Look, Ed,' she said.

'Aw, come on, come on!' the man said. 'Let's get going. What are you trying to do—freeze me to death?' He reached for her arm.

'Let her look!' Canada said mildly. 'Let her get her money's worth.'

'You keep out of this,' Ed said.

The girl's face was white and beseeching, and Canada stared at it. Then he unlimbered his muscles and said to the man: 'Take your hands off her!'

'Shut up,' said Ed.

Canada whipped out his wallet and peeled off a note. 'Here, kid,' he said. 'Take this and run. You ought to be able to get a cab in front of the Astor. Go home and stay there. Haven't you got enough sense to know what you're out with? Now beat it!'

Patiently Canada removed Ed's hand from the girl's coat sleeve and gave her a push. She fled, like a scudding leaf, over the snow, running like a child, not looking back.

Ed wasted no time. He charged Canada and landed the first blow. As Canada's chin went up, everything became lucid to him. He knew everything he had missed, thrown away, lost, despoiled, and squandered—the things that might have been and never had been, the things that had been and might not come again. Joyfully he swung his big fist.

For a while there were only powerful grunts and the thuds of blows in the silence, and then the empty street came alive and black figures raced from every direction. There was the shrill squeal of a policeman's whistle. Canada heard it dimly, wishing they would let him alone. He was slugging as he hadn't slugged since he was a kid, and he was being punched as he never had been punched. Blood was

running down his cheek, and one eye felt peculiar. The fellow knew how to fight, and if Ed hadn't got his legs entangled in the telescope, nobody knows how the whole thing would have ended. They fell with a crash, and Canada found himself sitting on the chest of his enemy. The telescope was shattered beyond repair.

When the police roared up, Canada was grinning with his cut mouth. 'Well, I got him,' he proclaimed. 'He was pestering a kid!'

Ed bellowed protest, but the police took him away. Canada was complimented for his quick action. Nobody suggested that he, too, should climb into the police wagon. He was treated like a responsible citizen, on the side of law and order. It was a new experience. They were even solicitous about his wounds.

'Oh, it's nothing. Nothing at all,' Canada said.

He leaned over with conscious dignity and gathered up the broken bits of the telescope. Then he carried them back to his hotel. They seemed to deserve some kind of decent burial. When he packed his canvas bag he put them in the bottom. There was no longer any reason for him to stay in New York. Whatever urge had bound him was dissipated. It was still four days until Christmas, and if he started at once, he might be able to make it.

When the morning train for Chicago pulled out, Canada Butler was on it. He didn't know exactly where he was going, but he thought it might be Meadow Lakes, Minnesota. Anyhow, he was on his way. As the train started its long trek up the Hudson River, a careless hand in the basement of a church on Riverside Drive flipped off the airplane beacon light that shone yellow on top of the Gothic spire. But that didn't make any impression on Canada Butler. He didn't even know it was there.

January First Story : *The Love Story of the Chef de Bateau* by D. Manners-Sutton.

Minuet

*Raindrop-tinkle of the faint spinet;
Ghosts are gliding through a minuet—
Silken shades with stardust-powdered hair,
Kissing perfumed hands that are not there.*

MARION KNEEN.

The Mystery of the Oak Island Treasure

J. H. TAYLOR

AMONG stories of hidden treasure, surely that of Oak Island is one of the strangest. Of the treasure's existence there would appear to be no doubt, but, despite the expenditure of years of work and large sums of money, the treasure has never been recovered. Neither has any satisfactory theory ever accounted for its presence.

The mystery started one summer day in 1795. Oak Island, an island off the coast of Nova Scotia, almost uninhabited, and covered with oak forests, was the scene of a shooting and exploring expedition by three young men, natives of the island. They had landed from their boat in a small bay and struck inland through the thick woodland in search of game. To the best of their knowledge this part of the island was completely unexplored, so the discovery of what had been a clearing sometime in the past aroused their interest and speculation.

The big oaks had been replaced by smaller saplings, except for one huge solitary oak in the centre of the space. Examination of this tree showed that one of its lower branches had been sawn off a few feet from the trunk, and the stump bore scars where a chain or rope had been attached. At first it was thought to be a gallows, but a shallow depression about ten feet in diameter in the ground beneath the branch dispelled such ideas and gave rise instead to the intriguing notion of buried treasure.

Obviously nothing could be done without tools, so the three made their way back to the boat, intending to return next day with picks and shovels. Whilst they had been away, the tide had fallen and had exposed a large rusty iron ringbolt set in the rocks, undoubtedly a mooring for a good-sized ship. This prompted

further search and the men found a silver boatswain's whistle and a copper coin dated 1713. They were now certain that a ship had lain here some sixty or eighty years before and that her crew had hidden a treasure under the big oak in the clearing.

Early next day the searchers returned with tools and set to work. It was soon found that they were excavating in an old clearly-defined shaft, and when they struck wooden boards at ten feet they were sure the treasure was theirs. The boards were thick, and taxed their combined efforts to remove them, but with disappointing results. They found only loose earth.

They dug on, and presently came on a second lot of boards, at twenty feet. Once more with intense anticipation the boards were lifted, to reveal again more loose earth. Undaunted, and by now certain that something must be buried there, they delved still deeper, and at thirty feet struck a third lot of boards. Tired muscles had a new lease of life as they strained at the boards, but once again only earth met their gaze.

They realised that it was now impossible to dig further without help. Although it meant a greater number to share the treasure among, more men were needed and some equipment for deeper digging was absolutely necessary. The treasure-seekers returned reluctantly to the village and told their tale, but, instead of the anticipated rush of helpers, they found that no one could be induced to go near the clearing. Stories of blood-curdling screams and mysterious lights emanating from the vicinity of the solitary oak had convinced the local inhabitants that the place was haunted and that no good would come of disturbing the spot. In the face of such opposition, the

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three young men had eventually to abandon the idea of recovering the wealth they were sure existed.

FOR nearly ten years no one visited the spot, until one day a Dr Lynd arrived from Truro, a small town on the mainland. Rumours of the treasure had reached the doctor and he had decided to see the place for himself. He got in touch with the three original discoverers and found that time had not dimmed their enthusiasm. In their company he went to the clearing, and after examining the excavation declared himself convinced that a treasure existed.

He returned to Truro and organised a company for the recovery of the hoard, experiencing no difficulty in raising the necessary capital. Before long he returned to the island with a load of equipment and a gang of labourers. A camp was established in the clearing and work began in earnest.

As the shaft deepened, more boards and other types of partitions were uncovered at intervals of ten feet. One layer was coconut-matting covered with charcoal; another, putty spread over sailcloth. At last, at ninety feet, the searchers came on a stone slab three feet in length and sixteen inches wide, with an inscription chiselled on its surface. This was removed, but still no treasure. As no one was able to decipher the carvings on the stone, it was left lying about until one of the original discoverers decided to use it as a hearthstone in the fireplace of his new house. Later, finding its way to Halifax, it was used by a bookbinder for beating leather, and in the course of time the inscription was obliterated.

The men dug on, and at ninety-five feet struck another platform of boards. It was decided to stop work for the night and remove these first thing in the morning. The boards were never removed. Next morning the pit, hitherto perfectly dry, was found to be flooded with water to within twenty-five feet of the top, which meant that seventy feet of water lay between the diggers and the bottom of the shaft.

It was decided to dig another shaft near the original one, in the erroneous idea that the water would drain out of one into the other. This, of course, proved vain, and there was such a rush of water into the new shaft that the men barely managed to escape with their lives. The company's funds were by now

almost exhausted, and, in the face of such insurmountable difficulties, it was decided to call off the hunt, leaving the treasure as far from the reach of man as ever.

FORTY years passed and the tale of the treasure caused another company to be formed for its recovery. Pumps were set to work on the water and it was reduced to within ten feet of the bottom, when back it came with a rush, and defied all efforts to lower it.

The new company was undeterred. They decided to bore for the treasure and so make sure of its existence before continuing their operations. A platform was rigged over the shaft, and on it a structure built somewhat resembling an oil-rig. The machinery was installed, set in motion, and the drill began its descent.

At ninety-eight feet it struck the platform reached by Dr Lynd's diggers and after penetrating this for five inches dropped suddenly for a foot. Now borings of oak came up and the drill bit slowly through four inches. Slowing down still more, it next cut for twenty-two inches through loose metal, though none was brought up except three small links of gold chain. Then came another eight inches of oak and a further twenty-two inches of metal as before. Next followed four inches of oak, six inches of spruce, and then into a bed of clay for seven feet.

Although no treasure had been brought up, there seemed no doubt of the presence of it in two great chests, each twenty-two inches in depth. To make doubly sure, the drill was now moved a foot or so to one side of the original bore. Once more the spruce platform was struck at ninety-eight feet, but after passing through this the bit dropped about eighteen inches and began to revolve in a jerky motion, indicating that it was bearing against the side of some hard object. Splinters of oak and coconut-matting were brought up, continuing for six feet until the final platform was again struck. On this evidence it was argued that there was a cask of treasure beside the two chests, but this tantalising knowledge did nothing to further recovery of the hoard.

It now became necessary to abandon work for the winter. The treasure-seekers were far from discouraged, though. They spent many a winter evening discussing new schemes of recovery and propounding theories on the mystery.

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With the summer came a renewal of operations in the form of a third shaft, sunk to the west of the original pit. This also became filled with water, but as it was salt, and rose and fell with the tide, the hunters were encouraged. It was reasoned that if the seepage of water had been natural it would have been impossible to bury the treasure in the first place. It was obvious that the flooding had been arranged and designed as a safeguard. There was bound to be a method of preventing the inflow of water, otherwise how could the original owners have ever recovered their property.

The searchers' next task was to find where the sea was let into the shaft. A careful examination along the shore where the ring-bolt was discovered brought to light a mass of small rocks unlike the surrounding gravel. On their removal, a series of drains was uncovered, proving beyond doubt that here was the entrance to the tunnel that led water to the pit. The hunters could now see the treasure within their grasp. All that was needed was a method of stopping the inflow, and a day or two for the pumps to do their work.

Alas for their dreams! A cofferdam was built around the tunnel entrance, but with each high tide it collapsed, it being impossible to attain any depth for the foundations. The next plan was to cut a shaft into the drain ashore and so cut off the water, but this, too, proved a failure. At a loss for further ideas, the company decided to expend its remaining funds on a powerful pumping-engine. The pump was duly rigged and pumping commenced, but it made absolutely no impression on the water-level. The treasure-hunters decided that this was the last straw, and gave up in disgust.

ANOTHER fifty years passed by, bringing us to the year 1896, and once again Oak Island became the scene of considerable activity. A new company had been formed, the latest equipment installed, and competent engineers engaged to uncover the elusive hoard.

Nearly twenty shafts were dug in a circle around the original, which had now become known as the Money Pit. A network of

tunnels connected them all and thousands of feet of shoring were used. The idea was to intercept the sea-water inlet and drain the original shaft—but it refused to be drained. All the modern methods of the time were of no avail against the skill and cunning of those unknowns who had so securely cached their probably ill-gotten loot so many years before.

This latest venture did, however, contribute some more information as to the extent of the treasure. Further borings had been carried out. Previously the total depth reached had been one hundred and twelve feet, but now a depth of one hundred and twenty-six feet brought up oak borings and then struck on solid metal on which no impression could be made. A smaller drill was started slightly to the side, and at a depth of one hundred and fifty-three feet it passed through a seven-inch layer of mortar or cement covering an oak platform, under which was soft loose metal presumed to be gold coins. Further borings located a total of seven casks or chests all containing loose metal, but not one piece of gold was brought to the light of day.

DESULTORY efforts to recover the treasure have since been made from time to time, but the mysterious chests and casks still lie deep in the ground covered by the unconquerable water. Modern methods and the expenditure of a large sum of money could effect recovery of the treasure. But would it be of sufficient value to cover the outlay? There may be millions in those casks. On the other hand, there may be nothing of value. Who can tell?

What has been the greatest mystery since the first discovery of the site is: Who put the treasure there? Nova Scotia is a far cry from the hunting-grounds of the Caribbean for the pirates of old. But who else could have possessed so much treasure? Why, too, did they take such extreme pains to conceal it and render it almost impossible of recovery? Did they never intend to recover it themselves?

All these questions will one day be answered when the treasure-bug bites someone who successfully brings the treasure to the light of day. Until then the Oak Island treasure remains a fascinating enigma and a challenge from the past to present-day treasure-hunters.

Fame at Last!

DORIS GUNDRY

HOW well I remember the morning I received a letter from my youngest sister. 'All our friends are delighted to hear,' she wrote, 'that my sister, the writer, is coming for Christmas!' And so, suddenly I came to fame—all on the strength of one article which had just appeared in a monthly magazine.

Up to that moment I had been a nonentity. This was first brought to my notice very forcibly at the age of eight. It was Christmas-time and a friend of my mother's who had recently been staying with us sent a thrilling parcel. Inside were three packages, each one beautifully done up, tied with ribbon, and labelled. The first label read: 'For Elizabeth' (my eldest sister). The second was addressed to Mary. The third, admitting defeat, said simply: 'To the Middle One.'

And so I became the Middle One. Logically, of course, the name fitted perfectly, but how I hated it! Why remind everyone, myself included, I thought, of my anomalous position? Why stress the fact that I was neither old enough to share in the delights of staying up late, going out to supper, and other grown-up privileges, nor yet young enough to be the 'baby' of the family, petted and indulged?

Perhaps it was my own fault, but somehow the title stuck to me. My eldest sister grew up and became the 'married one,' and later 'the one in South Africa.' My youngest sister was always the 'artistic one.' But, try as I would, I couldn't get myself accepted as 'the beautiful one,' 'the clever one,' 'the popular one,' or any other sort of a one. The truth is, I was none of these things. No, I was simply 'the Middle One'—that is, until I got into print.

I KNOW other middles who like myself have escaped into fame. One such is

Frances, born into nonentity. When her father arrived home from the East with a pair of snakes, it was Frances who adopted them, made them a little house in a box on the balcony, and tended them with loving care. Her supreme moment came when a whole family of baby snakes suddenly appeared.

True, they made plenty of trouble. Her best friend once ran shouting from the house when he looked down and observed a snake's head resting on his shoulder! But was Frances discouraged? Not at all. She kept on with her snake family, and now there's not a soul in the neighbourhood who would dream of referring to her as 'the Middle One.' Certainly not. She is 'the one who keeps snakes,' or 'my sister, the snake-charmer.'

Then there's Freda, middle daughter of five. One day she began enlarging upon the difficulties of being a middle one. 'No one could call me beautiful,' she said, strutting round the room like a mannequin on parade. 'Or ugly, for that matter. I'm not even brainy, and I hope I'm not a bore.'

I suppose she exaggerated a bit, but whatever it was, the poor girl was so comical that I couldn't help laughing. 'But you're funny,' I said.

That name stuck to her, and she encouraged it. Very soon she had a fund of amusing stories that would have done credit to the most accomplished after-dinner speaker. And from the rest of the family it was: 'Freda, tell Aunt Margaret your story of ...' or: 'Freda, what was that story that made everybody laugh?' It's a great gift to be able to make other people laugh, and 'the comical one' is a title any girl could be proud of.

YOU can, perhaps, fall back on being simply 'the married one,' but to do this, you've got to get in ahead of your sisters—and

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as soon as they follow suit, you've lost your advantage. The only thing to do then is to become 'the one with the big family.' This takes time, and you may not feel it's worth the effort.

An obvious choice—and a good one, too—is to take up cooking. If there's any truth in the old saying that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, your success is assured. You'll be popular with your family, too, and the greatest help as well.

Perhaps you're an outdoor girl? Then why not 'the one with green fingers,' or 'my sister, the dog-breeder?' And by the way, if you are breeding dogs, be sure to give each of the puppies a name, and never, never refer to 'the Middle One.'

I think it was the *The Adventures of Mary Jane* that first started me on the road to fame. By some strange coincidence she was a middle one, too. Perhaps that was why she quickly became my heroine. Happily I followed her through a series of incredible adventures with her sisters, in which, somehow, she always

seemed to come out worst. How I suffered through her misfortunes. How I boiled in anger against those successful sisters. But after a while my interest began to pall. I began to wonder why it was that Mary Jane never did any better.

And then it suddenly dawned on me! Of course—there were those sisters. Whatever happened, it was never Mary Jane's fault—it was always because she was the middle one. She made no effort to make things better. She just accepted them and was continually complaining.

This was no way to behave—even I could see that. Why didn't she *do* something. 'Anyway,' I thought, 'I will *do* something.' And so I began to write. And after a while I actually had an article accepted and won fame overnight!

O blessed article—worth so much more than the six guineas it brought me. Thanks to that article, I became an individual at last. I was no longer that nondescript Middle One. I became 'my sister, the writer.'

Christmas Eve

*The brush, the whisper of many feet
Drifts and hushes the silent street,
And from house and sky the double glow
Of stars above and lamps below
Is muted and softened, and now in the oil-black shadow
The thorn is hidden, the blood-bright berry made mellow.*

*Now, bright as a barn with sunlight and grain,
The church with its people is heaped again.
Like honey, the stone in the lamplight warms,
Laden, the tree lifts candles and cones,
Burnished, the ivy is twisted, and spicy, the pine
Sweetens the air, and the holly has lost its spine.*

*Now in the byre the cattle stir,
And watchful, the shepherd sees rising a star
As, in the fold, a lamb is born.
Now from the shadowy, stifling barn
A cock calls out, and the burnished curve of his cry
Tells of the friend that will fail, the King that will die.*

*And homeward, hushing with shifting feet,
The worshippers pass through the silent street.
Lamps are quenched, stars die with the dawn.
Only the shepherd, the newly-born
Lambs in the upland, the frost-ringed fold are waking,
And over the downs, like hope, the daylight is breaking.*

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH.



Reluctant Investor

LEO SPERO

MR TIMOTHY TRUEFITT, the learned Stipendiary at Bung Street Magistrates' Court, leaned forward from the high armorial throne on his majestic dais. The Court, including four closely-packed rows of tense spectators, sat expectant.

In the space before the dock, a small and wistful-looking defendant braced himself against the coming storm.

'Charge Number Six,' cried the Warrant Officer. 'William Symes, sir.'

The Clerk, at his busy desk below the dais, cleared his throat. 'You are charged, William Symes, under the Football Investments Protection Act 1956, Section 8, subsection 4 (b), with failure to complete certain documents, to wit, eight Football Pool entries, for due transmission to the prosecutors Messrs Porous Pools Ltd.'

'Eight? Dear me! Dear, dear me! H'm.' Mr Truefitt adjusted his formidable horn-rimmed spectacles. 'Now listen, Mr Symes. You have the right to ask, if you wish, that this case shall be remitted for trial at London Sessions.'

'Oh, sir! I don't want to go to no Sessions.'

'Please, Mr Symes. You can also ask that the case be heard and determined in this Court.'

'I'd like that, sir.'

'Maybe. But even so, if after hearing the facts, I should find the case proved, I might still feel obliged to refer such a serious matter to Sessions for sentence. You appreciate that?'

'Well, sir. I don't see as it calls for no appreciation.'

The 'Laughter in Court' was sternly suppressed by the usher.

His Worship was still frowning. 'I trust you are not being frivolous, Mr Symes.'

'Oh no, sir!'

'Very well. Do you plead guilty, or not guilty?'

'I ain't guilty, sir.'

'Then do you wish to reserve your defence and go to Sessions, or be tried here?'

'I'd like you to try me, sir. But I ain't done nothin', your Worship.'

'Precisely. That is the offence.'

'I just didn't send in no more coupons. But I sent the 'arf dollar wot I owed for me last gamble.'

'Gamble, Mr Symes? Gamble? Surely you mean investment?'

'Yessir.'

'Then use the proper term. You paid for your last investment, very possibly.'

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Mr Neville Twoface, for the prosecution, stood up. 'We admit the payment, your Worship.'

'Good. But thereafter, Mr Syms, you took it upon yourself to cease investing?'

'I didn't see why not, sir. I didn't *wanter* invest no more.'

'Didn't want to? But—surely, Mr Syms, you realise *something* of your civic and moral duties? Whether you *want* to invest or not is immaterial. Your private wishes are not to be consulted. Don't you *know* that?'

Mr Syms wiped his brow. 'I didn't think I 'ad to go on with it. Not by *law*, sir.'

'Ignorance of the law is no excuse. It is your duty, as a citizen, to support the country's fifth greatest industry.'

'Fourth, sir,' whispered the Clerk.

'Thank you, Mr Tinks. Our fourth greatest industry. How do you suppose this great industry could be carried on if everyone was allowed to discontinue his support at will?'

Mr Syms shook his head. 'I wish I'd never started. Then I reckon I shouldn't never 'ave 'ad to go on.'

'Very possibly. And I regret to note that, as the law stands, original participation in this great enterprise is not yet compulsory. That situation, however, is likely to be altered very soon. Am I right, Mr Twoface?'

Counsel thumbed his brief. 'The Football Pools Compulsory Completion Amending Act is now awaiting its third reading in the House of Commons, your Worship.'

'Why the delay?'

'Conscientious objection, sir. Strongly organised opposition from uninformed quarters.'

'Disgraceful! But it only makes cases like this all the more deplorable.'

'Malfeasance rather than nonfeasance, if your Worship will permit the comparison?'

'I agree. But we must get on. The defendant pleads not guilty. Will you open, Mr Twoface?'

COUNSEL bowed. 'I have here, sir, the last eight coupons received from the defendant. If, however, you require formal proof of his preceding entries, I must seek an adjournment.'

'Proof, Mr Twoface? Surely the mere statement of the complainants is sufficient? However—Mr Syms!'

'Sir?'

'Are you prepared to admit—How many would it be, Mr Twoface?'

Counsel made swift search. 'One hundred and three, your Worship?'

'Do you admit making one hundred and three investments previously to the eight now charged?'

Mr Syms looked worried. 'It won't let me in for nothing, will it, sir?'

'Quite the contrary. Anything you do to save the time of this Court, and the attendant expense to the public, will go in your favour.'

Mr Syms looked relieved. 'Thank you, sir, I'm shore.'

'Then you admit having been an investor with Porous Pools Ltd since—since when?'

Mr Syms looked worried again. Learned counsel hastened to furnish the date, which the defendant agreed. 'But I never clicked for nothin', sir. At least, only once.'

'Clicked?' His Worship's dentures also clicked—interrogatively.

'Won, your Worship.'

'Won? Won? Why *should* you win?'

'I don't 'ave ter win, sir, I s'pose. But I did think I *might*—you know 'ow it is, yer Worship.'

His Worship looked severe. 'I do *not* know how it is. Do you imagine Messrs Porous Pools Ltd exist to provide you with *winnings*? Avarice, Mr Syms—you know what that means?'

'Bein' greedy, sir.'

'Exactly. A deplorable vice. Expecting to win, eh?'

'Not *expectin'*, sir. Just 'opin'.'

'The same thing. And *quite* deplorable.'

'But I *did* win once, sir.' Mr Syms squared his lean shoulders. 'Last year.'

'Did you, indeed? How much?'

'Fifteen bob, sir.' Mr Syms's voice was proud. 'On the Three Draws.'

'Fifteen bob—on the Three Draws?' His Worship turned to the counsels' box. 'I got seven the week before last, Mr Twoface.'

'Seven draws, sir? That's pretty good.'

'Tut-tut? Seven *bob*, Mr Twoface. For *three* draws.'

Learned counsel looked perturbed. 'I regret to hear that, your Worship. The matter shall have my attention. Inquiries shall be made.'

Mr Truefitt raised a placating hand. 'Never mind, Mr Twoface. These things happen.'

'All in the luck of the game, your Worship.'

'Luck, Mr Twoface? *Game?* These are hardly expressions proper to a great national undertaking, one which absorbs millions, sharpening their zest for life, improving their mathematics, intensifying their interest in manly sport.'

Mr Twoface blushed. 'If your Worship pleases.'

'Then pray proceed, Mr Twoface.'

'**E**CTUALLY, sir' (Mr Twoface had served in the R.A.F.), '*actually*, this is the first prosecution, so far as I know, under the relevant statute.'

'I should hope so, Mr Twoface. I should not like to think that there was much of this sort of thing going on. Pray continue.'

Counsel continued, and things began to look pretty grim for the defendant. Mr Syms had indeed been paid fifteen bob for his successful Three Draws—and with his postal-order had received a specially-designed Card of Membership of the Porous Pools Fellowship of the Fortunate, printed in glorious technicolor.

The learned magistrate raised his eyebrows. 'You will be calling evidence as to this, Mr Twoface?'

'Certainly, your Worship. The Warden of the Fellowship is here to testify to the actual enrolment.'

'Very well. Proceed.'

Mr Twoface proceeded. He called his evidence, ugly and telling evidence, impossible to shake. Poor little Mr Syms refused to cross-examine, but looked more worried than ever. He had undeniably joined up and won his fifteen bob, though never anything more. As a member of the Fortunate Fellowship, he had invested steadily thereafter until the fatal hour of unlawful discontinuance.

'That is my case, sir,' said Mr Twoface. 'The only point at issue is whether the defendant, having *actually* begun his investment *before* the passing of the Act, can *actually* plead that he never became subject to its provisions. The *actual* words of the statute, sir—I have them here—are "any person who shall be or become such investor."'

'But those words are quite *clear*?' Mr Truefitt's tone was impatient. 'Its says "be or become," Mr Twoface. The defendant was, and became. I see no alternative interpretation.'

'If your Worship pleases.'

His Worship turned to the defendant. 'Mr Syms, you did not choose to cross-examine the prosecution's witnesses. It is now for you to produce your defence. You have the choice either of making a statement from where you stand, *not* on oath, or of going into the witness-box and being duly sworn. Which would you prefer?'

Mr Syms pondered for a rueful moment. 'If it don't made no odds, yer Worship—'

'I cannot predict the odds for you, Mr Syms.'

'Then I reckon I may as well go up there, sir.' Might 'ave a better chance up there, thought poor Mr Syms. They're all *on* at me down 'ere.

MR TINKS, having directed the due administration of the oath, sharply elicited the defendant's full name and address, and the fact that he had a wife and three children under age. Then he went on: 'What do you do for a living, Mr Syms?'

'Painter and decorator, sir.'

'And what do you earn?'

'Round about seven-ten a week—when I'm in work.'

'You're not in work at the moment?'

'N-no, sir. I bin out since the beginning of November.'

'Drawing unemployment pay?'

'Yessir. That's why I stopped investin'. Couldn't afford it no more.'

Mr Truefitt leaned forward. 'Couldn't afford it, Mr Syms? Why?'

'I couldn't take it from the unemployment, sir.'

'Why not? What d'you think the unemployment pay is for except to provide for your daily, or rather weekly, necessities?'

'I didn't reckon as 'ow this was a necessary. Not like rent an' food an' clothes—if yer see wot I mean, sir?'

'I do indeed. And it only shows your—your alarming ignorance of a public duty. How much unemployment pay are you drawing?'

'Three-fifteen, sir.'

'Three pounds, fifteen shillings? And out of that ample provision you could set aside nothing for Porous Pools—by whom you were actually made, as counsel has told us, a member of the Fortunate Fellowship? Scandalous! Three-fifteen, eh?'

Mr Syms twisted his fingers nervously.

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'That's not all we got, sir. There's the public assistance.'

'Indeed? How much?'

'Three-ten, sir.'

'Making seven pounds, five shillings in all?'

'Eight pound one, sir. There's two family allowances.'

'Eight pounds one, Mr Syms? And nothing put aside for Porous Pools?'

'Well, sir—I never thought as the public assistance was meant for *that* kind of thing.'

'Public assistance is meant for public purposes. What purpose could be more public than the support of a national industry? And the family allowance? Surely you must know—Oh, well—probably you don't. You seem to know so little. Is your wife in Court?'

'N-no, sir. She wanted to come. But I wouldn't 'ave 'er worried.'

'She knows about this?'

'Oo, yes, sir.'

'Then she knows it was her duty, out of the family allowance she and you receive each week, to provide for the normal statutory investment.'

'N-no, sir. She never done that. Some do, but *she* never. She put it aside for clothes for the kids.'

'Clothes—for the kids? Tut-tut! This case grows more and more deplorable. Mr Twoface, might I have your assistance for a moment?'

Mr Twoface rose, readily enough. He had been wondering when he would get a chance to do his own stuff. 'Yes, your Worship?'

'Tell me—what is the proper allocation usually made from the family allowance for the purposes of this Act by the average patriotic housewife?'

Mr Twoface considered the issue. 'There is nothing specifically laid down in the body of the Act, sir. But from subsection (e) of Section 7 in Appendix 4, taken in conjunction with the Interpretation Act of 1889, and the *actual* Interpretation Clauses of this particular Statute, it would seem that, in default of other provision, fifty per cent of the family allowance is indicated as—er—properly applicable to the purpose—except of course where Permutation is involved. In that case, as your Worship will appreciate, the proportion may well rise to one hundred per cent!'

'Permutation, Mr Twoface?' His Worship turned to the witness-box. 'You heard that, Mr Syms?'

'Y-yessir. But I never done no perming.'

'I wonder you have the hardihood to say so. By the way, Mr Twoface—in this connection might I—er—call upon your further kind assistance?'

'Certainly, sir.'

His Worship took out his wallet, and produced a document of a not unfamiliar appearance. 'I—er—I have eight lines here, but I'm not quite sure . . .'

Counsel reached out a helping hand. 'I shall be most happy . . .'

'Thank you, Mr Twoface. There will be a short adjournment, Mr Tinks—for private consultation.'

'SILENCE in Court!' cried the usher. 'Everybody rise. Silence, please.'

Mr Truefitt took his seat. Mr Syms was back in the space before the dock. Everybody but poor Mr Syms and the attendant police-officers sat down. 'I find this case proved.'

Mr Twoface rose. 'If I may address your Worship for a moment—'

'Certainly, certainly.'

Mr Twoface coughed. 'Without minimising the seriousness of the charge, your Worship, my clients would wish, in the circumstances, not to press it too harshly. If therefore, sir, you could see your way to take a certain course—'

His Worship sat back, and sighed. 'I suppose I must, in view of what you tell me, Mr Twoface.' He raised his head, inquiringly: 'Is Mr Moonlight in Court?'

A bland, benevolent, rotund person stepped forward. 'I am here, sir.'

'Did you happen to hear this case, Mr Moonlight?'

'The beginning and the end, your Worship. Sufficient to be apprised of the situation.'

'A sorry affair, Mr Moonlight.'

'I agree, sir. But if I can help at all . . .'

'Of course, of course.' His Worship bent a formidable downward gaze upon the criminal before him. 'Now attend, Mr Syms.'

'Yessir,' Mr Syms was all ears and eyes.

'This is Mr Moonlight, our Senior Probation Officer. I am asked by the prosecution, out of their sheer goodwill, to take a lenient view of this very grave charge. I am empowered to do so under the Probation of Offenders Act, as amended by the Criminal Justice Act—and you are a very fortunate man, Mr Syms. Very fortunate indeed. You understand?'

'Yessir. And thank you, sir.'

'Very well. You will be bound over for twelve months in the sum of Ten Pounds for this grave offence—but on conditions. You are to enter into recognizances for your good behaviour during that period, and must undertake henceforth to continue regular weekly investment with Messrs Porous Pools Ltd, the amount being not less than five shillings per entry.'

'Wot limit, sir?'

'The sky's the limit, Mr Syms. *You* should know that. You are to report monthly at this Court to Mr Moonlight with your copy coupons, and Mr Moonlight will report to me.'

'I'll do that, sir.'

'Failure to do so will entail serious consequences.'

'I—I can't perm, your Worship. I never did know 'ow to *perm*. But I tell yer wot, sir—I'll try the Four Aways. Reg'lar. I never done *them* yet. But the pay-off ain't too bad.'

'The Four Aways? Take a note of that, please, Mr Moonlight.'

Mr Moonlight scribbled a swift industrious memorandum. 'I have it, sir. The Four Aways. Regular. Shall I take Mr Syms into the office now, sir?'

'Please do. And remember, Mr Syms, this Court will be watching your future conduct. Do not think, just because of the leniency you have been fortunate to be shown to-day at the instance of the prosecutors, that the law can be trifled with a second time.'

'No, sir. And I'm shore I'm most grateful, sir.'

Mr Syms disappeared, under the avuncular wing of Mr Moonlight. His Worship turned to the counsels' box. 'The Four Aways, Mr Twoface? Would you recommend—er—they *look* easy enough. And the pay-off's good, it appears.'

Mr Twoface shook his head doubtfully. 'If I may suggest a certain course, your Worship . . . ?'

'Yes, yes.' His Worship's voice was eager.

'I should stick to the Treble Chance, your Worship.'

Ship's Cats

RUSSELL CAMERON

IT seems strange that while many volumes have been written about the feline tribe, friendly and savage, little notice has been taken of that unique and useful band, the ship's cats.

This is scarcely fair towards the cat who has elected to make his home on the rolling deep, for his duties are quite as important as those of any of his land-based brethren, and he is always most punctilious about the way they are carried out. At the same time, he is careful to maintain all the dignity and independence of his race, while developing a passionate jealousy over the proprietorship

of that portion of the vessel—and usually its quota of crew as well—that has fallen to his lot.

As most of my time at sea has been passed on big freighters and liners, my experiences naturally deal with numbers of cats aboard together—anything from four to forty. But during my spell with the Royal Navy I found that their cats, though fewer in number, were quite as resourceful as their brethren of the Mercantile Marine. In addition, they had a most uncanny awareness of impending danger, whether from aircraft or surface attack, and often their swift retreat to their own special

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hideouts was our first hint of approaching trouble.

Their skill in selecting these safe hidie-holes was almost miraculous—though they were immediately up on deck and ready for the boats if we had to prepare to abandon ship. They seemed almost to have some strange telepathic power that ranged far beyond the ship, enabling them to detect enemy thoughts directed against us, for they were usually quite unconcerned by the approach of friendly planes or submarines. They certainly knew well enough what was in *our* minds—but it is hard to account for the times when they knew before we did.

But let us return to the cats of the Mercantile Marine.

NO warring chieftain was ever more watchful of his boundaries than the average ship's cat. There are a few neutral grounds—including, of course, the galley—where he will meet others in the spirit of brethren in unity; but when each has retired to his own particular domain, he will vent the fiercest hate, with tooth and claw, on any interloper who may be rash enough to cross the invisible boundary-line.

This apportioning of the ship may at times seem a little complicated to mere humans, but it is obviously quite clear to the cats themselves, and the main rules are simple. All alleyways are recognised as common ground, especially those leading to the galley, and so are all stairways needed for general use by the cats when they leave their territory below—in hold, mess, saloon, or other selected spot—and come up on deck for sunning and general purposes. The deck itself is free to all, but the area allowed each cat is roughly that of the respective territory below.

One part of the ship, however, is usually catless—the engine room, since its smells and noises appear to hold little attraction for the average feline. Hence it is that rats are more likely to be found there than anywhere else. Once, when I was a very junior officer, a great buck-rat had become so well known in the engine-room that he'd been given the name of Jack. Word went round one day that he'd been cornered, and those of us then free from duty rushed along to the kill, snatching up any weapons that might prove handy. Mine was a long piece of rough wood with a nail at the end.

Sure enough, as we crowded in, there was Jack Rat in a corner, eyeing us with wicked spite. But before we could decide how best to close in, he'd acted. With a great spring, he shot up to the lower side of a huge pipe. Stung to action, we all rushed forward, swiping wildly as we went. But we were too crowded. My best chum got in my way, and he wasn't a bit pleased when my stick made a big three-cornered tear in his almost new reefer. There were several other casualties among us, and Jack Rat must have been chuckling to himself a moment later, for he performed the most astonishing feat I've ever heard of in rat lore. Having, by his leap, reached the underside of the great pipe, he proceeded to mount it, from the original momentum of his leap, curving diagonally up from the underside until he had gained the top, along which he raced to safety. And that was that—for the time being. But it will serve to show the cunning of these creatures, and to emphasise the skill which the cats need to keep the ship more or less free of these pests.

'RATS' is the answer to the question so often asked by passengers: 'Why so many cats?' While every possible precaution may be taken, cats are still the best means of preventing rats from entering a ship, and of killing them off if they do get aboard—and, especially in Eastern parts, this is an almost full-time job for the cats.

At every port, the big discs on the hawsers play their part fairly effectively in barring Master Rat's progress from quay to deck, although I have seen a rat leap the first disc, and even a second one, but never a third. There are, however, so many other means of access, including being carried on with cargo, that unless the cats were aboard to deal promptly with each intake the rats' terrific rate of propagation would make life on board almost unbearable. Usually the cats who are not exercising ashore will take duty watching the gangway-heads, ready to pounce in an instant on any intruders using this way of boarding.

Once the ship is away from port, the cats begin their cleaning-up manoeuvres. At all times, the rat is a nasty antagonist, but usually the average ship's cat rather prides himself on his ability to attend single-handed to the necessary extermination processes.

The cats, however, are never foolhardy, and for any special event, such as when a big buck-rat happens to need dealing with, some secret cat-call will summon reinforcements. It is only on such an occasion that a cat may leave his own domain and enter that of another feline, and usually it is the two nearest neighbours who arrive to render help. When such a trio join forces, it is certain that within the next few minutes there will be one rat less in the world—and that the manner of his passing will be anything but peaceful.

Passengers often assume that our ship's cats eat their victims, but this never happens. Only a starving cat, killing to live, will eat a rat. Well-fed cats kill from the hereditary instinct that the rat is an enemy to be dispatched in the largest possible numbers—not merely enough for a meal. Mice come into a different category—as tasty little snacks to be indulged in between proper galley-meals.

But the ship's cat doesn't waste his rat—his kill is reserved for a very special purpose. It is firmly grasped between strong teeth and carried with pride to whatever member of the crew holds highest place in the feline affections. And the gift must be received with obvious pleasure and the commendation 'Good Towser,' 'Good Satan,' or whatever name it may be, accompanied by much stroking and tickling under the chin, with corresponding loud purrs and burlings from the cat.

WITHIN his own special domain each cat usually has his own favourite among the crew of that territory. This is a very high position, requiring much diplomacy and self-restraint, because, if any undue intimacy be shown towards any other member of the cat contingent, that particular feline will suffer at the claws of the offended one, while the favourite may be treated with high dudgeon until suitable apologies, such as a specially tasty bit purloined from the galley, have been offered and accepted.

There can even be snobs among cats. One that I knew during apprenticeship days was our Captain's cat, who refused to allow himself to be touched by anyone of lower rank. We were quite certain he could count the four gold bands as he graciously welcomed any visiting Captain.

Of course, aboard ship the question of watches sets the cats certain problems that are unknown to their brethren ashore. Four

hours on and four hours off (or asleep) is a discipline that is apt to prove rather trying to the feline nature, and no strict rules are observed. In good weather, the times on deck may coincide with the favourite's spell of duty; but in bad weather, never. Again, rats may require attention during the favourite's sleeping hours. So the cats decide their individual attitude towards watches according to their own particular personalities and self-appointed duties.

When on deck, the cats are careful to take no risks of going overboard—in fact, I've never known such a thing to happen. But once, during my apprenticeship days on a great sailing-ship, one of our cats climbed the ratlines to the cross-trees of the mainmast. Such procedure had never been encouraged—and this occasion proved a lesson to the other felines, for the aspiring one took fright and had to be ignominiously carried down in the arms of his favourite.

But however bad the weather, cats prove excellent sailors. For a cat to be seasick is unheard of. With their true instinct for comfort, they go below to the snuggest quarters immediately heavy weather blows up.

PASSENGERS often imagine that our cats are born at sea and thus acquire some hereditary liking for the life. But this is very seldom the case, as nearly all ship's cats are toms who have been dedicated to the catching of rats and not to the propagation of their species. If one of the cats should happen to die or be killed, it is usually the concern of the crew of the vacant domain to seek a suitable replacement at the next port of call.

This is a fairly simple matter, since the various offices about the docks usually have several shipless cats awaiting adoption, and the catless members of the crew prowls round until finding one that appeals to them. They never steal from another ship, though exchange of quarters may be effected if one ship has acquired too many felines. Neither will they pick up any dock cat without first looking into his history, since he may be merely on land for a stroll, or even awaiting the return of his own ship, although it is very unusual for a cat to get left behind. All ship's cats like their prowls around the docks whenever opportunity offers, but they all seem to know the special sound of their own ship's bell or siren, and may sometimes be seen

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streaking like the wind through the maze of dock roadways in order not to risk being left behind.

It may occasionally happen, however, that a cat has succumbed to the lure of a sleep in some warm, cosy corner—possibly while watching for mice—and found himself shut in until after his ship has sailed. But in such a case he is sure to be recognised as belonging to that ship, and will be tended by someone or other about the docks until he can be restored to his owners. He may even be given passage in another vessel that is likely to contact or overtake them.

Cats take to ship's life very easily. Even on their first voyage they seem to have an uncanny intuition of what is expected of them in the way of respect for boundaries and their duties towards their own section of the crew. Occasionally it may happen that the newcomer

is only a kitten, and then special measures are taken for his instruction both by *his* crew and some of the nearest cat neighbours.

The value placed on their cats by the ship's company is shown by the fact that if disaster should overtake a ship and she is fated to sink, the cats have the same right as their human pals to a place in the boats—and they get it. It is no uncommon thing for a sailor to risk going down with the ship if he thinks his own special cat has been trapped anywhere on it.

The tradition of cats at sea, although almost unrecorded, must go back many centuries, for in the old sailing-ship days, with land sometimes out of sight for months on end, men could grow sick of the sight of each other. It was then, especially, that their small feline friends, with their funny little ways, proved a heaven-sent diversion in the cause of preserving sanity and goodwill.

Enigma

*Our eyes were coals in Set's dark caverns gleaming
When Man was one with Earth's primeval slime.
Ere great Osiris stirred him in his dreaming,
We sat as Elders in the Halls of Time.*

*Eternal Bast bequeathed us her protection.
From fire and flood miraculous we rise,
And priests have chanted our divine election
In temples dim beneath Egyptian skies.*

*When good St Francis called us little brothers,
And lifted us upon his sainted knee,
He found we would not linger with the others,
So blessed us with a sigh, and set us free.*

*We are the hunters of the silent places,
The hearth our haven when the chase is done,
Cruelty and love are mingled in our faces,
Brethren of darkness—children of the sun.*

*Warriors knew us in their hours of glory,
'Neath tent and sail, and when their ships had wings,
And we have shared, through life's tumultuous story,
The pomp of Cardinals, the tombs of Kings.*

*Never shall Man our spirits wholly master;
Light o'er his long-dead dust our feet shall fall;
For when his pride has wrought its own disaster,
Still shall the Cats be arbiters of all.*

HEATHER VINEMAM.

Policeman's Plot

New Scotland Yard's Grand National Opera House Site

DOUGLAS G. BROWNE

THERE must be people living who remember having seen, when they were very young, an immense building rising above hoardings in the shadow of Big Ben. Intended to be one of the sights and attractions of London, this colossus was never finished, but it survived, roofless, for a number of years, to be demolished little more than seventy years ago. Its foundations remain, and are embodied in those of another building known by name the world over—New Scotland Yard; but the transient superstructure, and the ambitious idea which inspired it, have been almost completely forgotten.

The eighteen-sixties saw the beginning of great changes in riverside London. In particular, from Westminster Bridge to Blackfriars old wharves and warehouses and little streets along the north bank of the Thames were swept away to make room for the Victoria Embankment. Valuable building sites, extending for a mile and a half, were thus created.

Of all these, the most valuable and important, on account of its position, was a rectangular plot of boggy land and reclaimed mud close to Westminster Bridge. The roadway of the new Embankment bounded it on the river side, and the houses of Cannon Row and Parliament Street (then only half its present width) on the opposite landward side. North and south, as the river here runs, the limits were Richmond Terrace and Mews and the building and grounds of the Civil Service Commission behind Bridge Street. There had been a timber-yard on the site, and a wharf and a miry lane between gabled wooden warehouses. For centuries high tides had flooded it, and it was so waterlogged that for

some years after it was cleared and embanked it was unfit for any but the lightest structures; and when the roadway along the Victoria Embankment was opened to the public in 1868 this acre or two beyond it was tidied up, as a temporary measure, and laid out as a public garden. The Ordnance Survey of 1870 shows a semicircular shrubbery on the Embankment side. The tunnel from the new Westminster Bridge Station on the Metropolitan District Railway ran beneath the garden, in the middle of which one of the brick airshafts not uncommon in the London of those days emitted smoke and fumes from passing trains.

THE future of so central a site, when it should have dried and settled, was much discussed in the press and in Parliament. Among those who had an eye on it from the early days of the reclamation was Colonel J. H. Mapleson, an operatic entrepreneur, like his father before him, and a prominent figure in the musical and theatrical world of his own time. An ideal carried out in certain Continental capitals is to have a home for each type of opera—German, French, Italian: London had only one opera-house, situated in a squalid neighbourhood and facing a police station, a juxtaposition which so annoyed Queen Victoria that after attending a gala performance at Covent Garden she ordered the blue lamp at Bow Street to be removed. Bow Street was until recently the only Metropolitan Police Station without the familiar lamp. For mysterious reasons connected with the Town and Country Planning Act, it now has to share with one other station

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a distinction in which it took pride. Not even Queen Victoria could transplant the capital's chief vegetable-market from the vicinity of the Royal Opera House, and Mapleson had already found support for a scheme to launch a rival opera-house in more suitable surroundings in the Haymarket. The newly-cleared site at Westminster, by its size alone, offered far greater scope for his ambitions.

During the early eighteen-seventies he was busy enlisting backers, including opera-singers, whom he was accused of luring from Covent Garden. Probably the best-remembered of these is Madame Theresa Tietjens, known as 'Tishens' to the gallery boys of the old Theatre Royal in Dublin, where in those exuberant days baskets of flowers were lowered by ropes of roses to idols on the stage. Sufficient funds having been raised or promised, Mapleson leased the site from the Metropolitan Board of Works. An architect was appointed, and in September 1875 Madame Tietjens laid the first brick of the foundations of the Grand National Opera House.

It was to be not merely grand, but grandiose. The architect, Francis H. Fowler, was influenced by the design of the Opera House in Paris, opened that year. His building was to be a third as big again as Covent Garden, having an auditorium measuring 100 feet by 102 feet and a stage with a clear depth of 80 feet. The main arcaded entrance was on the new Embankment, and there was a Royal Entrance on the west side, approached from Parliament Street by what is now Derby Gate. The front was faced with Portland stone; the sides were of brick with stone settings. Above the foyer towered a huge conical glass roof. The architect's drawing, when shown at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1876, had a mixed reception. One critic described the edifice as 'piled up tea-chests'; the *Building News*, on the other hand, approved of its 'sportive and *allégresse* qualities.'

Behind this pretentious façade Mapleson's enterprise and optimism ran riot. James Glover, for long musical director at Drury Lane, enumerates in *Jimmy Glover—His Book* (which contains photographs of a model of the building) some of the more remarkable features. There was a separate concert-hall, and a picture-gallery for works rejected by the Royal Academy. Dressing-rooms were provided for opera addicts coming from a distance and those arriving by train could reach the foyer by a tunnel from Westminster Bridge

Station. A second tunnel was to give access to the Houses of Parliament. Much care was taken for the well-being of expensive tenors and contraltos; there were rest-rooms and billiard-rooms for them, and two large Turkish Baths. Two eminent throat specialists were retained for emergencies. The salubrious air of the upper Thames was to be invoked, and an admiral was appointed to command a tug and a houseboat. On the latter, which contained its own concert-room, the opera company was to be towed to Twickenham or Hampton for jollification and rehearsals.

On the more practical side, Mapleson arranged for the Royal Academy of Music to occupy one corner of the huge building, and the Lyric Club another. He also hoped to let what was left of the site, on the south side, where Scotland House and Cannon Row Police Station were later to rise. Full of confidence, he seems to have inspired confidence in others, including the Court. At a final ceremony, on 16th December 1875, a foundation-stone was laid by Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh. The Brigade of Guards found a guard of honour, there were the bands of the Brigade and the H.A.C., and among those present in a large and draughty marquee were peers, junior Ministers and Members of Parliament, and the Mayor and Sheriffs of Westminster. In an address to the Duke, Mapleson defined his chief aims. 'The National Opera House is to be devoted firstly to the representation of Italian Opera... and secondly, to the production of the works of English composers, represented by English performers.'

SELDOM can so auspicious a beginning have come to so speedy and mortifying an end. Already even the optimistic Mapleson may have had forebodings. £40,000 had been spent, largely on the foundations. These had to be sunk 22 feet 9 inches below pavement level, the site, as he said, being little better than a swamp. The estimate for this work alone was to be exceeded by £30,000. Prophets of woe began to be heard, led, not unnaturally, perhaps, by the manager of the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. Soon there were ominous reports in the press of difficulties with the contractors. More than once, in fact, before the next six months were out, work stopped altogether.

Again and again, however, money was found, and the great building, by fits and starts, rose above its hoardings and then above the lower houses about it. In the autumn of 1876, when it had reached the level of the Grand Tier, the *Building News* had hopes that 'it would be in a fair state for the next opera season.'

They were vain hopes. The Grand National Opera House was never to be completed. So short was the life of this young giant, and so short are memories, that how much of it was completed is difficult to ascertain. In August 1877 Mapleson was writing to *The Times* to say that £40,000 was still needed for the roof. Before this there had been questions in the House about 'the present remarkable building on the Embankment, now long stopped for want of funds, exactly opposite the windows of Her Majesty's Office of Works.' In February 1878 it was stated officially that no rent had been paid for the site since Michaelmas of the previous year. References to the missing roof suggested that, externally at least, the edifice was all but finished.

It was a sad ending to the dreams of Mapleson and his fellow-enthusiasts. Accounts vary as to how much money was lost, but the colonel had come to realise that no more could be raised, and that in the interests of his stockholders, and to pay the ground-rent, the unfinished monster must be sold. There was a rumour that it was to be converted into a hotel, and a French syndicate seems to have been negotiating for the site with a view to building a block of offices.

IN the meantime, in uncomfortable quarters further up Whitehall, where there were no dreams, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Colonel Henderson, was urging upon higher authority the importance of not losing such an opportunity. When Peel created his police force in 1829, its headquarters were at 4 Whitehall Place. Before long numbers 2 and 3 were taken over, and then 1, 2, and 3 Palace Place. Next, the Lost Property Office acquired a building called the Clock House, and the Store and Stables, and finally the Detective Office, found homes of a sort in Great Scotland Yard. As the central office of a growing and complicated organisation, this 'dingy collection of mean buildings,' to quote *The Times*, was highly inconvenient, and the overcrowding was appalling. 'In-

numerable books are piled up on staircases,' said *The Times*, 'so that they are almost impassable, piles of clothing, saddles and then horse furniture, blankets and all manner of things, are heaped up in little garrets in a state of what outside Scotland Yard would be called hopeless confusion.' For a long time, indeed, there must have been talk of finding more suitable accommodation; but no definite step to this end appears to have been taken until the collapse of Mapleson's ambitious scheme offered a most desirable site for an entirely new police headquarters.

It remained, as in Mapleson's case, though now the issue lay between Government departments, to find the money. An early proposal 'to convert the new Opera House... as a Police Office and a Chief Station for "A" Division' was filed away. This was in November 1878, and in the following year Henderson was trying again, without result. The next advance came from another quarter. In 1880, when the Commissioner was once more referring to 'an opportunity which will probably never recur,' the Metropolitan Police were privately offered the Opera House, still standing roofless, for £25,000. The old proposal for adaptation was rescued from the files, and it was thought that the derelict eyesore could be converted to the needs of a police headquarters at the cost of another £50,000. Most fortunately this idea came to nothing; no police force could live down a headquarters embellished with the 'sportive and *allégresse*' features of an opera-house.

By this time Mapleson and his stockholders could wait no longer. Soon afterwards the great building was sold as it stood for £29,000. Various schemes for its conversion having come to nothing, it was resold as building material for a few hundreds. The site was still to be disposed of, and now at last agreement was in sight for its purchase on behalf of the Metropolitan Police. The departmental negotiations cannot be described as expeditious, for they were not completed until 1886. The sum paid for the freehold was £188,000.

The Government rightly decided that so important a position, in the heart of the capital and the Empire, demanded a building worthy of it externally; and Norman Shaw, as one of the most original architects of the day, was commissioned to design the structure for which he is most famous. A later Com-

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missioner of Police, Monro, was to name it, almost on the day of his resignation, New Scotland Yard.

A relic of the Grand National Opera House, and a very substantial one, is still there. New Scotland Yard was raised literally on Fowler's

foundations, Norman Shaw estimating that £40,000 was saved by their incorporation in his own. The tunnel to Westminster Station also remains, and is occasionally used to give access to the building in times of abnormal congestion in the streets.

The Colonel's Tale

*It happened in Poonah, in '01, I think,
The Subalterns' Cup had been played;
We officers sat with our whisky to drink,
As far as we could, in the shade.*

*The punkahs were swaying above and around,
The time for our tiffin drew near,
When the peace was disturbed by a sinister sound
Which filled my companions with fear.*

*A man-eating tiger with menacing tread
And a cold, hungry look in his eyes
Advanced from the flank. I, of course, kept my head,
But the others said hurried good-byes.*

*I was always the man for a critical case,
And scarce had the tiger been seen,
When I emptied my chota peg straight in his face,
For the Regiment, God and the Queen!*

*My aim was superb, and he stood with the drops
Running all down his whiskers and nose,
But he only replied, after licking his chops:
'I could do with another of those.'*

*'Help yourself, sir,' I cried, 'with a liberal hand.'
He said: 'I don't mind if I do.
You really provide such an excellent brand,
I could do with a gargle or two.'*

*The sight of him, lowering peg after peg!
It was really a pleasure to watch.
I was left like a man who has only one leg,
And I used to be good with my scotch.*

*At last spake the tiger: "'Tis time I returned
To the one I have lately espoused.
I never take chances where she is concerned—
She's a regular tigress, when roused.'*

*He went on his way, but my action was seen
And earned me no little repute.
So: 'Long Live the Regiment! God save the Queen!
Stand up, you young cubs, and salute!'*

G. M. SINGLETON.



A Horn in the Orchard

RHODA SPENCE

I WAS only nine when I thought I had killed the fairy in my grand-aunt's garden at Balbowie, but, though I am now in my fifties, I remember that day and the night which followed more clearly than many I have known since.

It was one of those quince-coloured afternoons in autumn, like something seen through a piece of amber glass. Even the dappled stone walls of the old Fife house looked as if they held the warmth of a hundred bygone summers, and its rosy tiled roof burned more richly than usual against a sky of keen, east-coast blue.

The garden lay still as an old print, its foliage showing drifts of yellow, brown, and crimson among the fading green. Along the herbaceous borders the fires of autumn flowers smouldered—the harsh orange flames of marigold and red-hot poker, the softer apricot hue of the gladioli, and, in between them, the mauve of the Michaelmas daisies and asters was like smoke from a garden bonfire.

From where I sat on the swing that hung between two gnarled trees I could see the whole length of this little kingdom that was mine only for another three days until school claimed me again. Two months of holiday had not been enough in which to discover all

the ins and outs of house and garden, though I had been allowed to wander from the crowded attics right down to the boundary-wall which divided the policies of Balbowie from the seashore.

I had opened and shut the doors of unused bedrooms, furnished with richly-padded beds, chairs and tables spindly as old bachelors, and secretive green mirrors that seemed to reflect the past alone, rooms where the curtains always rustled slightly, as if I had disturbed an unseen occupant. I had explored the treasures of the rose-scented drawing-room under the indulgent eye of my grand-aunt, who allowed me to unlock its cabinets and handle the curios brought back to their Fife home by generations of kinsfolk, from the first rich Niven of Balbowie, who made the Grand Tour in 1718, to those rather less opulent representatives of the family in the Indian Civil Service at the beginning of the nineteenth-hundreds, among them my own father and uncles.

Oddly enough, the minute, the doll-size in bijouterie had held a special fascination for all these big, rather solemn men, whose portraits or photographs were everywhere at Balbowie, and the light that filtered through the embroidered curtains of the drawing-room gleamed on tiny silver furniture from 18th-

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century France and Italy, on Lilliputian porcelain, and on those ivory figures from the East which are no bigger than a walnut, yet so cunningly wrought that one can discern on their faces a smile or a sneer an eighth of an inch in length. It was a paradise for a lonely child, and many a rainy afternoon had I passed among these things, putting an infinitesimal Chinese doll to sleep in a Parisian bed about the size of a large matchbox, or giving her a ride in a silver sedan-chair that could stand on my palm.

But the house was forbidden territory on bonnie days such as this, for my grand-aunt had determined that I should go back to school with some colour in my wan, Anglo-Indian cheeks. So I swung to and fro among the trees, lulled almost to sleep by the warmth, by the rooketty-coo of the pigeons on the crow-stepped roof, and the hum of the bees bumbling between the flower-beds and the row of bee-skeps under the sunlit wall.

At times I was aware of a shiller note in the drowsy music of the afternoon, as if someone were blowing one of those small, silvered glass horns that are used to ornament Christmas-trees. I knew well the far clear noise they made, for I had found a box of such things in one of the attics, and had been fascinated by the sound, like the summons, I thought, of a fairy huntsman. Aunt Libbie had said that I could take one to play with, but I had lost it after the first day, somewhere among the orchard trees, where apple and pear now ripened on the bough.

Who could be blowing my lost horn? Not Jamie the gardener, not fat Susan the cook, for I could see the one sweeping up leaves on the terrace, and the other was busy with her jam-making in the kitchen, as the scent of warm blackberries and sugar testified. In any case nothing so frivolous would entice Susan from the anxious moment when the jelly was going to jelly.

The sound fell on my ears again, and curiosity overcame the idleness bred by the soft air. I slid from the swing and ran down the long slope towards the shrubbery. Faster and faster I went, my thin legs twinkling over the grass, until, all of a sudden, I tumbled over the edge of a piece of ornamental stonework, and crashed to the ground on the path which divided the lawn from the bushes, my hands landing heavily on the earth beneath a clump of rhododendrons.

As I lay, winded for a moment, I was

conscious of something small and warm beneath my right hand, as if I had struck a tiny living thing in my fall. Rather gingerly I sat up, with a rueful glance at my scratched knees, and there, where my hand had been, was the body of a wee man, no more than three inches long. Near him was the lost horn which looked huge in comparison, like a trombone beside a child.

I HAD not the slightest doubt that it was a fairy, for I had heard so many old nursery tales at Balbowie that I regarded Elfland as a kind of suburb of the everyday world. But what, oh what, had I done to this minute creature? Still as a dead bird he lay, his eyes closed; the veins in his skin were sapphire-bright, his hair gave back the glitter of the sun, and his tunic and hose were of a sea-green colour. He was a beautiful and enchanting find for any child to make, but I had surely killed him in my headlong fall, though I had always believed the fairy-folk to be immortal.

Very gently I lifted him and cradled him on my palm, then laid my ear to the place where his heart should have been. But there was no sound, and the faint warmth that I had felt at first was giving place to chill, so that he felt like a handful of snowflakes. With a terrible pang of guilt and fear I put him down on the earth again, and looked round to see if anyone had seen my act. But Jamie was still sweeping up leaves, and Susan was clattering about the kitchen premises. Aunt Libbie would, I knew, be having her afternoon rest, for the curtains of her bedroom window were drawn.

As I wondered anxious what to do next, the golden quality of the day seemed to ebb, and a wind from the sea swept furiously through the garden, shaking each tree and bush so that the dry leaves rained down, stinging my face and head like little arrows. I heard a movement in the shrubbery, and parted the bushes to see what was there, but I saw nothing to account for the dry pattering sound which had been closer and sharper than the rush of the wind.

I felt that I could not leave the wee man lying out all night. Even though he might be dead, the rain and earth would soil his body and his iridescent green clothes, and that was an idea too horrid to contemplate. I would wrap him up and take him into the house, and perhaps he would revive in a warm room. As

A HORN IN THE ORCHARD

I lifted his body once more, I saw a large autumn leaf, crimson and velvet-soft, lying near my feet. I rolled it round the fairy and it covered his limbs and body, standing up about his yellow hair like the collar of a cloak. Holding the little thing against me as one holds a doll, I wandered miserably up the path, looking down at his tiny face, small as a daisy's, at the minute curls which clung to his scalp. The wind showed no sign of dropping, and everything in the garden seemed to bar my way, as if its gentle plants and flowers had suddenly returned to the wild. The lower branches of the trees threshed at my face, the rose-bushes reached out their thorny stems to catch at my ankles, and all the time I heard that strange, threatening scurrying in the undergrowth. Cold and frightened, I broke into a run, and plunged into the cosy kitchen, nearly overturning Susan carrying a tray of jam-pots.

After a severe warning as to the dangers of haste, she looked hard at my pale face and staring eyes. 'Guidsakes, the bairn's ta'en the cauld,' she said. 'Away up to your auntie in the drawing-room. Your tea's been ready this last wee while. Did ye no' hear me cryin' on ye?'

'I was far down the garden,' I mumbled, heading for the stairs, lest she should ask me what I was carrying. Down the well of the staircase floated Aunt Libbie's gentle call. 'Tea's ready, Elspeth. Wash your hands and come along quickly. The hot scones will be quite spoiled.'

'Coming, Aunt Libbie,' I replied, speeding one flight farther up to my bedroom, for I simply could not bear to tell her about the dead fairy, and I would have to put the little body somewhere out of sight until I could think what to do about it. There was an old-fashioned blue-velvet pincushion on my dressing-table, and, removing the few pins it held, I laid the wee man upon it and put him in my handkerchief-drawer. Just in case he should revive, I left the drawer open a crack, then washed my hands and ran downstairs to the drawing-room.

Like Susan, Aunt Libbie was quick to notice my white, shocked appearance, and also put it down to the sudden cold that had descended upon the autumn day. She plied me with hot tea, well milked and sugared, drew my chair up to the fire, and was concerned because I would eat neither the hot scones nor the seedcake I usually adored.

'Early to bed for you,' she decreed, 'with a lemon drink and a hot-bottle. What were you doing in the garden to get so chilled?'

I fell back upon the invariable answer of the child with a secret, who would probably say 'Nothing' if it had watched Gabriel blowing his golden trumpet. She did not press the matter, and presently I was allowed to bring a small table near the fire and play with the model furniture from the big cabinet. It was then that I had the great idea. If I came back to the drawing-room after the house was closed for the night, I could lay the little man on the silver bed. Then perhaps the other fairies would come for him and take him back to his own country. The only difficulty I foresaw was that the furniture always had to be replaced in the cabinet, and the key turned in the lock of its door. The pieces were valuable, some of them unique, and Aunt Libbie, although kind, would allow no carelessness. I would just have to notice where she kept the key, and unlock the door after she had gone to bed.

TO say that the prospect of roaming about the great house alone after dark frightened me is an understatement. It almost paralysed me with terror, for, though the tall rooms were friendly by daylight, they had at night that quality of inner life which all old rooms hold when their usual tenants are asleep. But pity for the little man, mixed with fear for the possible consequences of my mishap, drove me on to carry out my plan. Aunt Libbie was late in putting out her light, for she always read in bed, and it was half-past eleven when I heard her making preparations to settle down, with a click of the lamp-switch, and a slight rustle as she drew the bedclothes around her.

Shivering, I stood on the threshold of my room, listening for complete silence. But it never came. The stairs creaked as if from the pressure of footsteps. Owls cried eerily in the garden. The grandfather-clock on the landing knocked and rapped as it never did by day; suddenly it cleared its throat with a terrifying whirr and began to strike midnight. Outside, as if all the witches in Fife were abroad, the wind rose to storm force, and the house seemed to sway from the onset.

My heart thumped so loudly that I thought even Aunt Libbie would hear it, but I forced myself to go down the staircase with the wee

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man clutched to my bosom. His appearance had not changed, and there was still no sign of life. He looked like a little ivory figure, stiff and cold, and I could not help weeping silently as I realised afresh what I had done through my clumsiness.

Once in the drawing-room, I pulled a chair towards the mantelpiece and searched in a vase for the key of the cabinet, for I had seen Aunt Libbie place it there. Balbowie had never been troubled with burglars, and evidently she had no reason to believe that they would break in now. The little man I laid on the small table where I always played with the furniture, and, turning the key in the lock of the cabinet, I opened its doors and drew out the pieces most suitable for my purpose.

By now I had decided to furnish an entire room for the fairy man, just in case he should revive and feel strange and lonely before his kinsfolk arrived. Though I dared not light any of the lamps for fear of wakening Aunt Libbie, I could see quite well what I was doing by the beams of the storm-tossed moon that flooded through the long windows. I could even make out the design of the dear little bed, its sides composed of two silver swans, its canopy the wings of a third swan. The bed I took out first, and laid my lavender scent-sachet upon it to make a mattress, while my best lace-edged handkerchief served as a coverlet. And there I put the fairy to rest, noticing sadly that he was paler than ever in the moonlight, while his clothes looked faded, like the petals of flowers kept too long in a hot room.

By his side I placed a miniature silver table bearing a porcelain tea-set so small that its cups were not bigger than a child's thimble. With the idea of leaving food for him, I had taken some cake crumbs and a drop of honey from the tea-tray before it was cleared away, and these I put in the wee dishes. On the other side of the bed I placed a model standard-lamp about the height of a pencil. I know now that it was not a piece of value like the others, but a gilt metal toy from the old family doll's-house, but then I thought it an exquisite thing, with its twirly filigree pattern and pink silk shade.

Lastly, I remembered, invalids always had flowers. I dared not admit to myself that dead people had flowers too, for I would not believe that the fairy was really dead. From the cabinet I took a minute Chinese vase, and

in it I placed a spray of fuchsia from the nearest pot of growing plants, moving it to the foot of the bed so that the bell-like purple blossoms cast a shade over the wee man's feet and legs. Then I sat down to wait events in Aunt Libbie's big armchair, so deep that I could almost hide in its shadow, my dressing-gown drawn round me for warmth.

THE wind, which had fallen for a time, was besieging the old house again, prying at the shutters, making the chimney-cowls skirl and turn like live things. Every now and then a wilder gust would drive a hail of withered leaves fiercely against the panes of the long windows, where they cracked viciously on the glass. Or were they just leaves? Were there not small shapes pressed against the glass, diamond-bright eyes looking in? Did I not hear above the moan of the wind a higher, lighter sound, like the early wakening of birds, but not so cheerful in its note, which was one of sorrow or pleading.

I felt that I ought to open the window and let the little people in, but I was too afraid of what might happen when they found what I had done to the wee man, even though it had been an accident. In any case, the window-catch was high up, and rather stiff for my fingers. So I just 'cooied' down in the chair, as Susan would have said, and waited, rather puzzled that they did not use their magic to get in. Again and again they cast themselves against the glass, joining their mournful cries to those of the owls in the garden and the gulls on the shore beneath the boundary-wall. How Aunt Libbie did not hear the tumult, I cannot think, except that she had slept for many years in the old house on the edge of the sea, and the storms that assailed it were familiar music to her ears.

Just as I was summoning courage to undo the window-catch, a stronger gust of wind drove like a battering-ram against the house, and the central window, which gave on to a small balcony, burst open with a force that made everything in the room shudder and tinkle. The mandarin figures on the central table nodded their heads, the strings of the guitar that hung upon the wall thrummed loudly, and its red and yellow ribbons fluttered. The china monkey orchestra beneath the Venetian mirror clinked as if about to play, and the green glass candlesticks on the mirror gave out a tiny chime.

Quick as a mouse, and as terrified, I fled beneath a large table in the corner, hiding from view under the folds of its red chenille cover. I listened, how I listened, as the room creaked and shook like a ship at sea, but in the onrush of storm it was impossible to trace lighter sounds. I could have peered between the bobbles of the fringe on the tablecloth which nearly touched the ground, but I was afraid to be seen, for who knows what might follow discovery.

So I crouched for a long time, until the wind dropped and silence folded the sleeping house, silence broken only by the deep tick-tock of the clock on the landing. Timidly I crawled from my hiding-place and looked towards the little bed which I had laid out for the fairy. It was empty.

Weak with relief, I stumbled to the window. Below me the garden lay silver and black in the moonlight, each flower and tree motionless, as though autumn had stolen a night from midsummer. I thought I saw a brief glimmer, like fallen starlight, far away by the sea-wall, and from a copse at the foot of the lawn came a glorious trill of song, like the outpouring of a late blackbird, then a

hush so deep fell on Balbowie that even the tide was a whisper, remote as the sound which comes from a shell held to the ear.

Too weary to climb the stairs to my bedroom, I curled up again in Aunt Libbie's chair, and went sound asleep, and there Mirren the housemaid found me in the morning. She made a great outcry, and no wonder. The window still swung open, creaking in the brisk sea-breeze, the silver furniture was scattered about the table, one of the guitar strings was snapped, and the carpet was thick with dead leaves. Aunt Libbie didn't scold me. She declared that I had been dreaming and sleep-walking, perhaps feverish after the cold I had caught in the garden. As for the confusion of the drawing-room, the storm, she said, had obviously burst the window open and blown everything awry.

But I knew better. A dream doesn't last for an afternoon, and through the best part of a night. A dream doesn't account for the fact that my best lace-edged handkerchief was never seen again, or that just before I went back to school I heard someone blow the little silver horn, far away in the depths of the orchard.

D'Ye Ken John Peel?

MORRIS DANESBROUGH

JOHN PEEL'S wife was in labour. The expectant father was anxious—but not for his wife. It was Rosley Fair Day in June 1814 and Peel, the son of a horsedealer, wanted to be off to the fair, which was noted for its horses. He was told that twins were on the way, and he replied: 'It disent matter if there be four, I mun gang til Rosley Fair.' And go he did!

The story is one of many, some true, some quite fabulous, which have attached themselves to the great huntsman like iron-filings clinging

to a magnet. Facts about John Peel's life are difficult to find. But at least one date is certain—he died a hundred years ago.

He was born at Park End, near Caldbeck, in Cumberland, in the heart of the country that lies between Skiddaw and Carlisle. When he was a few weeks old he was taken to near-by Greenrigg, so often claimed as his birthplace. The actual date of his birth is not known. He was baptised on 24th September 1777, but he may well have been born in the previous year, or even earlier. It was not

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uncommon for children to be taken to baptism in their clogs in those days, and often two or three additions to the family would be baptised together. On his gravestone, his age when he died is given as seventy-eight, and from this some writers confidently assert that Peel was born in 1776.

At the age of twenty John Peel fell in love with Mary White, the daughter of a local farmer. The banns were put up, but at the first time of asking Mrs White objected to the marriage because, she said: 'They're far ower young.' But Peel wasn't too young to saddle his father's horse, Binsey, and take Mary to Gretna Green, following, incidentally, his father's footsteps to marriage. The Whites later relented, and John and Mary were married 'properly' in Caldbeck church on 18th December 1797.

Mary, we are told, had a dowry of some £400. Even this fact has been questioned, but without such an income it is difficult to imagine how Peel was able to spend the rest of his life following his two favourite pastimes, hunting and drinking, and in addition to support a family of thirteen children.

After the marriage, John and Mary lived in several houses in the Caldbeck district, eventually settling at Ruthwaite, a farm near Ireby. Ireby is about six miles from Caldbeck and claims, I believe, to be the smallest market-town in England. It has achieved fame in another sphere: readers of Sir Hugh Walpole's *The Fortress* will remember Walter Herries's house at High Ireby.

HUNTING in Cumberland, in Peel's day and now, is both a necessity and a sport. The foxes that lurk among Lakeland crags are real enemies, not just an excuse for a day's sport. Lambs and poultry are their special prey, and if Reynard were not hunted and destroyed local farmers would be very much the poorer.

Peel hunted with his own pack of ten or twelve couples of hounds for over fifty years. He was out at dawn at least two days a week, either on foot or on his pony, Dunny. All the Lakeland packs to-day are foot packs—horses would be useless among the rough fell country—but John Peel Country, as it is still called, is softer and less craggy. Peel, I fancy, would ride where he could: if bog or bracken or rock were too much for his pony, he would quite happily change to Shanks's.

Peel had some incredible runs, runs which would make the red-coated trotters of the southern hunts turn pale. In 1829 a seventy-mile chase over eleven parishes is recorded; there was a sixty-mile run in 1848; another over frozen country in 1812 which lasted over ten hours—and the fox got away.

A nephew of John Peel told the late A. G. Bradley that when Peel wasn't hunting 'he was aye drinkin'. Peel's prowess as a hunter seems to have been matched only by his fame as a drinker. Perhaps he was no exception in an age when heavy drinking was common—Boswell's Journals have shown us what a sea of alcohol men wallowed in a hundred and fifty years ago.

'He wad drink, wad John Peel,' a local once said, 'till he couldn't stand—and then they'd just clap him on t'pony and away he wad gang as reet as a fiddle. Odds barn, they war hunters i' them days!' Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who on occasions hunted with Peel, tells in his *Reminiscences* that he heard Peel say: 'Now this is the first fox we've killed this season, and it munna be a dry 'un!' The hunters would then repair to the nearest public-house, according to Sir Wilfrid, who was himself a staunch supporter of teetotalism, and would remain there for as long as two days.

From John Woodcock Graves, a close friend of Peel and the writer of the song, 'D'Ye Ken John Peel?', came the following tribute: 'As to John Peel's character I can say little; he was of a very limited education beyond hunting, but no wile of a fox or hare could elude his scrutiny; business of any shape was utterly neglected, often to cost beyond the first loss. Indeed, this neglect extended to the paternal duties in his family. I believe he would not have left the drag of a fox on the impending death of a child or any other earthly event . . . Peel was generous, as every true sportsman must ever be. He was free with the glass "at the heel of the hunt," but a better heart never throbbed in man; his honour was never once questioned in his lifetime.'

Opinions about Peel, with evidence as slight as it is, will always be sharply divided. We may think of him as a great huntsman who, alone and unaided, hunted his own pack for many years and inspired the greatest of all hunting-songs. He was, in fact, once suggested as the patron saint of Cumberland, as a type symbolic of true sportsmanship and

the embodiment of all that is best in Cumbrians.

The other point of view is that expressed by a vicar of Caldbeck in 1929. The Reverend W. Hornby, son of a former headmaster of Eton, wrote in his parish magazine: 'But why make such a hero of one who neglected his farm and impoverished his family by his unrestrained pursuit of hunting? Let people by all means hunt as a recreation within reason. But is a rather exaggerated and legendary reputation as a hunter sufficient reason for so exalting a man, when really nothing else can be put to his credit?'

IF Peel the man does not deserve the immortality he has had thrust upon him, 'D'Ye Ken John Peel?' has become a second national anthem. Whatever we know or think about Peel himself, the appeal of his song is never in question.

One night, about 1830, Peel and his friend, John Woodcock Graves—a much more interesting character than Peel—were sitting in Graves's house in Caldbeck. They were arranging the following-day's hunt. The story is continued in Graves's own words:

'Large flakes of snow fell that evening. We sat by the fireside, hunting over again many a good run, and recalling the feats of each particular hound, or narrow neck-break 'scapes, when a flaxen-haired daughter of mine came in saying: "Father, what do they say to what Granny sings?"'

'Granny was singing to sleep my eldest son—now a leading barrister in Hobart Town—with an old rant called "Bonnie Annie." The pen and ink for hunting appointments lay on the table. The idea of writing a song to this old air forced itself upon me, and thus was produced impromptu "D'Ye ken John Peel, with his coat so gray?"'

'Immediately after, I sung it to poor Peel, who smiled through a stream of tears which fell down his manly cheeks, and I well remember saying to him, in a joking style: "By Jove, Peel, you'll be sung when we're both run to earth."'

The song was probably quite popular locally and was passed on from singer to singer. In 1866, Graves, who was living in Tasmania, invested its copyright in George Coward of Carlisle. Under the pseudonym of Sidney Gilpin, Coward published his *Songs and Ballads of Cumberland* and the words of the

song appeared in print for the first time. The version Gilpin used was collated from several sources and was much revised, polished, and given something of a literary finish.

But the song's march to world-wide fame really begins on 30th June 1868. At a farewell dinner for a John Clarkson held in Carlisle on that date, 'D'Ye Ken John Peel?' was sung by a local singer, William Lattimer. Among those present at the dinner was William Metcalfe, a member of the choir of Carlisle Cathedral and a musician of note in the district. He saw possibilities in the song and the next day visited Lattimer and took down the words and music. He managed to search out the original tune of the Border rant mentioned by Graves, 'Bonnie Annie,' and freely adapted it into its present form.

Publication and some success followed. Then Metcalfe was asked to sing the song at the annual dinner of the Cumberland Benevolent Society, held in London on 22nd May 1869. To fulfil the engagement, Metcalfe disobeyed a decanal order, but there is no doubt that this was the occasion which gave 'D'Ye Ken John Peel?' its send-off to universal popularity. 'When he sang it in London,' writes Hugh Machell, Peel's biographer, 'it created quite a furore, and before leaving the room he booked orders from the different guests for nearly a hundred copies.'

The song has changed much since it was first composed by Graves; verses have been added and mistakes have been perpetuated. Some versions use 'gay' instead of 'gray' in the first line. Peel was no scarlet-coated huntsman; he wore a knee-length coat of coarse, undyed herdwick wool, probably made in Caldbeck, possibly at Woodcock Graves's woollen-mill. 'Troutbeck' is sometimes substituted for 'Caldbeck' in the so-called 'memoriam verse'.

Why is 'D'Ye Ken John Peel?' so popular? Probably because it has a marked, jiggling rhythm; a childish, uncomplicated tune; and, above all, a triumphant octave jump in the third line of verse and chorus. It is easy to remember and lends itself to be sung and enjoyed, especially after suitable priming, by the worst of croakers and by those who have never hunted more than a thimble.

It has had its red-letter days, too. It was sung at the relief of Lucknow, and a *Times* correspondent once said that its greatest day was when the infantry marched to its stirring notes over the Hohenzollern Bridge at

Cologne on 13th December 1918. It is still the march-past of the Border Regiment.

Without the song, Peel would have been nothing more than a local worthy. To Cumbrian sportsmen, Tommy Dobson and Joe Bowman are equally famous as great huntsmen, but neither of them is well known outside Cumberland and Westmorland. Peel was a contemporary of Wordsworth, but nowhere, in letters or Dorothy's diaries, is there a mention of him. Contemporary guide-books, such as Harriet Martineau's, which was published in the year of Peel's death, have no references to Peel. Dickens and Wilkie

Collins stayed in the Caldbeck district in 1857, and Keats actually passed through Ireby in 1818—but they are silent about Peel.

The reason is clear. Peel inspired the song, but it was not until after his death that it and he began to be widely known. A man who is callous enough to leave his wife when she is in labour or to hunt the day after his son's death, who drank so much that a public subscription had to be raised to pay off his debts, hardly deserves the glory that has surrounded Peel. But without him there would have been no 'D'Ye Ken John Peel?' Perhaps we can forgive him a lot in return for that.

Broilers

CYRIL WILKINSON

ONE day in the winter of 1880 a group of enterprising fruit-growers in Hammonton, New Jersey, discussed a way of making money in the slack season. Their brainchild of breeding tender young chickens they called broilers failed then—but now nearly seventy-five years later it might be the means of stimulating Britain's poultry industry, winning dollars, and lifting chicken out of the delicacy class.

At present only a few breeders scattered throughout Britain rear broilers—the 3 lb. birds which are as popular now in American chicken parlours as are fish and chips in these islands. But extensive plans are now being prepared to launch a full-scale broiler industry in one corner of England.

The idea came to the mind of a Northamptonshire poultry-farmer when a young American serviceman strode up his fields seeking a broiler. The breeder, hearing of the wonderful success of the birds in America, set out to investigate the possibility of establishing a similar industry in this country.

Poultry experts with the Ministry of Agriculture gave full co-operation in ex-

periments connected with the cross-breeding of birds and the building of suitable shelter for them. They found out from travels in America that the way to success depended on producing a 3½ lb. bird at a cost of less than 6s. a time. Growth had to be rapid and the chickens well-fleshed although eating less than 12 lb. of food in their short lives of eleven weeks.

The experts' studies showed them, too, that the birds produced better quality meat and ate less food per lb. of flesh gained than the more conventional types of hens if kept permanently in a well-insulated building with a level temperature of between 60° and 70° F. Each bird required at least one square foot of space and the buildings had to be well-ventilated or fitted with fans to reduce condensation. The food, while containing a great deal of protein, should also have a low fibre ration, and, most vital of all, must hold a sprinkling of streptomycin, aureomycin, or some other antibiotic wonder drug.

Through research the poultry investigators found also that the venture of the fruit-growers failed largely because of ignorance of

poultry diets and diseases. As the years passed and knowledge of vitamins moved from the laboratory stages into practical use, so the commercial broiler industry grew. Its greatest fillip in recent years came from the discovery of antibiotics, found to stimulate growth and give a measure of protection against disease, which spreads rapidly in a crowded poultry-house.

A smaller but nevertheless important point learnt was that all-night lights in the houses led the birds to eat during the night when temperatures were kinder after a hot day and also prevented the headlamps of passing cars from frightening the birds.

SINCE 1945 the broiler industry in America has developed at an even faster rate than before the war. Up to 1934 there were few broilers on the market. Five years later 102 million were produced. By 1949 an estimated 487 million were reared and killed, sufficient to provide 10 lb. of young chicken, in addition to other poultry meats and red meats, for every man, woman, and child in the country. Scores of 'fryer factories' have been started in recent years, supplying 40 per cent of the nation's poultry meat.

Mr Geoffrey Sykes, a member of the British Poultry Mission to America, in a recent address to the Farmers' Club in London, stated that in the Middle West it was quite common to find a farmer's son looking after 10,000 broilers and helping his father on the farm for five hours a day as well. At the other end of the American scale is Texas, reputed for having everything bigger and better. There, it is not unusual to see buildings 1000 feet long on broiler farms which process 40,000 birds a week throughout the year.

Reflecting on this picture, English breeders realised that an industry here would have to be on a smaller scale. Yet if the plan was to be a success, one small county could not give the necessary regular flow of birds. The answer to this problem, they believe, is to create from the combined counties in the East Midlands a second Georgia—one of America's top broiler states, growing 18 per cent of the nation's frying chickens.

In the 3,500,000 acres of Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and parts of surrounding counties, contacts were made with other poultrymen who were keen to join in the scheme. Successful

experiments have been made with breeds and buildings, food and heating methods, and now the plan is launched. Within the next three years, 3000 breeders on farms and smallholdings in the area are expected to take up the industry. Encouragement is being given to young farmers' clubs and advice is offered on adapting farm buildings which stand unused. It is intended to raise gradually the flow of birds that are killed. Already a factory established on producer-owned co-operative lines has been opened in the Lincolnshire Fen town of Boston and is handling a considerable number of broilers every week. As the industry develops, so will membership, and once it reaches 5000 members another similar factory will be set up in Market Harborough in Leicestershire. All the broilers are collected at eleven weeks and dispatched to Boston, where they are killed, plucked, and graded. From there a good marketing service is assured.

A STEADY even flow of birds is vital if the broiler plan is to succeed. Once the flow is big enough, the Continental exporters of poultry to this country will feel the draught of competition. At present they supply, almost without exception, all the large hotel chains and big restaurants in Britain with regular deliveries of chickens that are uniform in size and weight. Catering experts demand these qualities because of their system of costing. For example, one catering chain uses 1200 birds every week, and as they are all cooked in groups of 24, all must be of similar size and weight to avoid complaints from customers of either overdone or underdone meat. At present the English poultry industry cannot satisfy this constant demand for birds of equal size and weight. Within a few years broiler breeding could win this valuable trade from the Continentals.

In addition, it could earn the gratitude of the Chancellor of the Exchequer by being one of the few ways in which English agriculture could export for dollars. American servicemen and their families based in England consume 30,000 broilers a week—at the moment all brought in from America. The American authorities have stated that they would gladly buy the birds from England if they were available. And what is more, they would take thousands in addition each week to ship across to their forces in Europe.

Through low-cost production practices that are largely due to developments in nutrition, genetics, and disease control, and through improvements in recent years in management and technological fields, the broiler industry could lift chicken out of the festive and special occasion classes. Compared with the traditional table bird, broilers require less food per lb. of meat, consequently reducing prices to the housewife—probably by as much as a shilling a lb.

In America this type of chicken is distinctly in competition with butcher's meats and holds its own with red meats in respect of quality, food value, and price per lb. At home, this revolution in poultry husbandry—mass production of fresh meat with small profits—is already being felt in Birmingham. One large store there is being supplied with broilers, portioned and packed on papier-mâché plates covered by airtight paper. The amount of chicken contained in the packages varies—

along with the prices—so that families of all sizes can be satisfied. Breeders are working on the principle that by cutting up chicken in $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. sections they are given twenty times the potential customers they would have if they tried to sell the more conventional chicken for 12s. whole. Many feel that as more and more small cars are brought on to the market, individual farmers will have opportunities to sell presentable poultry-meat on the roadsides in much the same way as in America, where suburban folk, bored by traffic jams, drive out of towns to do their shopping.

They think, however, that the express-delivery methods of America are a little further off. Not for some time can they visualise the English housewives telephoning to the nearest chicken parlour and answering the doorbell a few minutes later to receive tender meat, hygienically wrapped, from the hands of a fast motor-cyclist!

The Lonely Christmas-Tree

*In glittering regalia,
Tinselled by winter's hands,
The little last year's Christmas-tree
In lonely splendour stands.*

*It winks across a garden
With the family away,
As though to tell the empty house
What day it is to-day.*

*And not a person comes to see
The wonder of that little tree.*

*No lights burn in the windows,
But night brings watching stars,
And timid rabbits come to look,
And beams from passing cars,*

*Searching the gates and hedgerows,
The headlamps sweeping by,
Light up its spangled glory
As though they played I-spy*

*With a little last year's Christmas-tree,
Forgotten, yet still gay—
Keeping Christmas in the garden
In a good old-fashioned way.*

EGAN MACKINLAY.



Johnny's War

D. KERMODE PARR

'WHAT'S the inscription mean, Great-uncle John, on this silver tankard—about Johnny's War?'

The old man chuckled. 'Now that's a story I could tell you, and none with better knowledge,' he said.

It was a fine afternoon in the late summer of 1847, a peaceful time in the days of the young Queen Victoria, when a treaty had at long last been signed settling the troublesome disputes over the border between Her Majesty's territories and those of the United States. Geoffrey Turner's father had moved with his family to New Brunswick that year, on affairs about the building of railways, for the first lines were already successful in England and construction was afoot in the North American colonies. One branch of the Turner family had been established on that side of the Atlantic for some two centuries, first in Massachusetts and then in New Brunswick. So it was natural that the boy Geoffrey should spend his first summer at their home on Turner's Island, ten miles out from St Andrews, in the Bay of Fundy.

'Yes, I can tell you about that, Geoff, for it relates to an adventure of my own, here on this very island. Would you like to hear it?'

'Very much, sir,' said the boy, and settled himself to listen. And here is the story, as Geoffrey set it down on paper out of a keen memory some time later.

GREAT-UNCLE JOHN, you call me, but I was Johnny to my parents then, of course, and just the age you are now, fourteen, when it happened. That was in 1787, as it says on the mug there, four years after we came to settle here on Turner's Island.

You've heard how we United Empire Loyalists had to abandon our lands and all property beyond what we could bring with us by ship when we preferred to live still under King George rather than accept the sort of liberty the revolutionaries offered us. Not liberty truly, but a mean tyranny it was.

My parents were among those who moved at first to the Penobscot, when it was believed that settlement should be on the Nova Scotia side of the boundary. But in the negotiations the rascals won their point that the St Croix must be the boundary, so we dismantled the houses we had built and loaded all the material in brig and schooner.

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In that manner we came here to this St Andrews region.

My father had a grant of good forest land over by Chamcook, and this island. He determined on building his house here, for it was handier to get about by water then. The roads and the coaches that seem so commonplace to you were only gradually established, later.

Sixty-four years ago, but I remember as if it had been yesterday the morning of 1783 when we landed here. My father brought me ashore with five of his men, leaving my mother with the two younger children aboard the brig in which we had made the passage.

When he had decided where we should make the first clearing for the house, the men were about to fall to work, when my father held up his hand. 'I want Johnny to fell the first tree,' he said, making a formal little speech. 'He is like to live longer than the rest of us and I hope he will be able to look back in his old age on this day and think it was an honour to begin the work on a new settlement that shall ever, I pray, remain loyal to King George and his heirs.'

So I swung the axe and made good time for a youngster to fell the tree. It was a birch, some eight or nine inches through the trunk. I had the more reason to remember that, too, for a couple of days later, upon some misbehaviour of mine, my father cut a handful of its twigs where it lay handy, and I became also the first boy on the island to get a sound whipping for his improvement. But by no means the last—eh, Geoff?

SO we settled, but the first years were hard and uncertain. There was still argument about the St Croix and which river was rightfully so called, and more about where the boundary ran among these islands of Passamaquoddy Bay. Some of them changed hands more than once before all was settled.

All through that troubled time, and the strange war of 1812, when the people of both sides of the river swore they would not shed each other's blood, and almost to this day, the disputes went on. But with the treaty now signed on the negotiations between my Lord Ashburton and Mr Daniel Webster we may hope the boundary is finally drawn. And long may our young Queen Victoria hold her North American colonies thus in peace.

We were fortunate here in having no serious attack but on the occasion commemorated by that bit of engraved silver. In 1787, that was.

It so befell that all our people were away in various voyages, save only the one serving-maid, Martha, when on a July day my mother had the great misfortune to fall and break her leg. She must be taken by boat to St Andrews for a surgeon to attend her, and it was like to be three days before my father could get all arrangements made and be home again.

We had four cows here, and other livestock, so after some thought my father determined that he must leave me here alone to care for them. A litter was improvised and Martha helped him put my mother aboard the boat, where the girl would tend her mistress while my father handled tiller and sheet.

Before he cast off, my father gave me my instructions, with word that if any serious trouble arose I should hoist the flag on the mast by our house. That was visible by telescope from the St Andrews navy wharf, where the commander was an old friend, who could be counted upon for the favour of having the lookout train his glass on our island every watch. If the flag were seen, my father would come or send at once. Otherwise, if I should manage with success, he would complete his dispositions on the mainland and I should see him again in three days' time.

I had no trouble with the milking and feeding that evening nor afterwards.

IT was the next morning that I sighted a strange boat, sailing a course that looked to take her past our south cove a cable length out, and so up the bay. As she disappeared behind Pine Point I could see there were three or four men aboard. Half-an-hour later I looked out to see what course she would steer after crossing the cove and rounding Spruce Point beyond. I watched for a time, but there was no sign of the boat. That could only mean that she had put in to the beach. So it was needful I should go and see what was afoot, and I took cautiously a path through the woods to reconnoitre.

When I came to a spot whence I could look out from concealment in thick bushes, I saw that there were three men ashore. Two of them were in military attire, somewhat worn

and dirty, truly, but recognisable as the uniform of militia from the State of Maine. The silver-buttoned green coat and black tricorn of the other showed him for a civilian.

A moment's reflection brought me to the conclusion that somehow word had reached them of my father's landing at St Andrews apparently with his whole family, and the occasion seemed ripe for a seizure of the island. They were belike an advance-guard for an occupation in greater force before long.

I must get my trouble flag hoisted, and bring help to overpower them. First, though, I thought I might spoil their freedom of movement.

They had tied their boat to a rock on the side of the cove where I was, and were busy chopping at some trees on the far point. Some casks and other gear were visible in the boat, but only one chest, which was of the kind soldiers then used for store of powder and ball, had been unloaded. Over it lay a couple of boat cloaks.

So I worked my way down, keeping well hidden, to the rock, where, out of sight, I might sever the rope and set their boat adrift. To make it seem an accident, I worked slowly, cutting fibre by fibre irregularly with my knife, so that when the rope parted no one would see other than a frayed, broken end cut through by friction against a sharp edge of rock.

When I severed the last strand, the boat moved at once on the ebb, and I well knew that, with the tide-rip across the cove, in ten minutes she would be half-a-mile away on a course for Grand Manan.

Then I got back into the thick bush and looked again at the invaders. They had been lopping branches from a sapling that stood somewhat apart on the point. It seemed their intention to improvise a flagstaff, and even as I watched they hauled up an American flag.

A moment later there was a shout, and all turned and began to run back along the shore. They had seen their boat drifting.

I moved away silently by the wood-paths I knew so well, to get back to the house and hoist my flag. Then the thought struck me that first, while the attention of the invaders was wholly on their lost boat, I could work my way round by Spruce Point and haul down that accursed flag waving with such effrontery over this portion of His Majesty's territory.

It was then that I encountered defeat in my campaign!

MY reconnaissance had been insufficient. Just as I reached out to cut the halyard, a heavy hand clamped on my shoulder and I found myself a captive. There had been a fourth member of the landing-party, and it was this individual, returning from some scouting of his own in the woods, who had come upon me from a direction I had not watched. I tried to twist away from him, but could not succeed. The American was a tall fellow, with a grip of steel.

In a few minutes I found myself in the midst of the group of them. Fortunately for my hide they had no suspicion that the severed rope was anything but the accidental result of friction against the rock, and in fact my captor, who seemed to be in command, roundly rebuked the other civilian, as the one who had made fast the boat so faultily.

The leader questioned me sharply about my presence here when the family had left, and presently began to issue orders.

'I had been minded,' he said, 'to wait until Hancock arrives with the main party to-morrow before taking over the Turner house. But now by this carelessness we have lost our means of shelter and our provisions. You two'—this was to the soldiers—'make a thorough reconnaissance of the island. 'Tis but a mile and three-quarters or so in length, so you should make sure in an hour that no one else has been left here. You, Jem, take up the chest and follow me.' With that he untied the fathom of rope left on the rock and made it fast round my waist, took up his cloak, and with a firm hold on the rope ordered me to walk ahead towards the house.

WHEN we arrived at the house my captor had Jem set down his burden and take over the holding of my rope, while he himself explored the buildings and the immediate surroundings. Frantically I cudgelled my brains for some means whereby to get my signal of distress hoisted. If only they would leave me unguarded for a quarter of an hour!

After a while the two American troopers returned with the report that the island was entirely clear of other human presence.

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'Well, my boy,' said their leader to me then, 'I will untie you, but don't try any tricks. To-morrow I will find some way to dispose of you. Send you by our vessel to Machias perhaps, and you can be sent back to the boundary from there.'

'To-morrow, sir,' I said, 'when my father returns, it is you who will be removed from this island. This is part of His Majesty's colony of New Brunswick, sir, and you have no right here.'

The American laughed. 'I make no doubt you have been so taught, boy, but that is wrong. This island is rightfully part of the sovereign state of Maine, and we have now taken possession of it.'

Inspiration came to me then. 'Your proceedings, sir,' I said, trying to sound as cheeky as I could, 'seem to me more like those of a smuggling party than of a military expedition. You had a flag, as I saw, but no doubt you are ashamed, like the rebels you are, to fly it here where it might be seen.'

That brought me a sharp cuff on the side of the head, but it also brought a sharp order to Jem to go instantly to the cove and bring their flag to hoist on our lofty flagstaff by the house.

In ten minutes more Jem had obligingly set my distress-signal fluttering in the breeze!

THE invaders shortly decided they must eat and, going into the house, they took me with them to serve as kitchen-boy. So for a time I was kept busy fetching them supplies of our good bacon and bread, potatoes and cheese, and laying the table for them. It was as I did so that my second and best stratagem came of a sudden into my mind.

From a drawer I took four silver spoons, somewhat worn, that we used for ordinary meals. It had indeed been an odd circumstance in our loyalist settlement that many were better supplied with good silver saved from their lost homes than with the common utensils of everyday kitchen need. 'No doubt your worships will wish to use the best silver,' I said then in what I was careful to make submissive accents. 'If you will allow, I will fetch it up.'

'Oh ho, there is silver, you say?' exclaimed the leader. 'I have a mind to see it. Where is it kept?'

'It is in a great chest in the cellar, sir,' I

told him, at the same time drawing aside a rug, hooked by my aunt Lucy, that covered a trap-door in one corner of the kitchen. I pulled the trap-door up, and the American followed me down the steps.

We had indeed a noble store of silver, brought from the great house in Boston. I raised the lid of the big oaken chest—yes, the same one you have often seen in the pantry of this new house, Geoff—in which all the best of it was kept.

The American stepped up to it and by the light of a tiny iron-barred window above saw the gleaming array in the top tray. He uttered a loud exclamation of surprise and delight, and that, as I had wildly hoped, brought the other three scrambling down, anxious not to miss a share of the loot, and not to let their commander have unrestricted first choice!

They had no eyes for me as I slipped silently back up the steps. I dropped the trap-door and hastily shot its big iron bolt. It was a stout bolt, but there were four men to heave against it, so to make more sure my prisoners should not force the door up I set about dragging sacks of potatoes and flour from the storeroom. We had plentiful supplies and I kept at it until, with the bags and some kegs and other matters, I must have had a ton of victuals piled over the cellar entrance.

Then I went outside and hauled down the invaders' hateful flag and with a joyous heart ran up our own beloved colours.

SEVERAL hours later three boats sailing in company put in and tied up at our landing-wharf. You can imagine the excitement with which I had been watching from the moment they hove in sight. Two of them were navy pinnaces, and with the seamen in them were fifteen or twenty soldiers. As the redcoats came ashore and formed up on the beach, my father walked up the wharf with a very splendidly-attired gentleman in a plum-coloured coat with white facings, white breeches, and a cocked hat.

'What is happening here, Johnny?' called out my father.

'Four Americans came to take possession of our island, sir,' I answered. 'Two of them are in military habits and the other two in ordinary dress.'

'And where are these invaders?' asked the splendid gentleman.

'I have them shut up in our cellar, sir,' I told him.

'Pon my soul, Turner,' the gentleman exclaimed, 'this sounds plaguily interesting. Let us hear the story.'

'Tell us what happened, Johnny,' commanded my father. 'But make your bow first to Governor Carleton. His Excellency is on a visit to St Andrews and being told of the American flag sighted over our house was graciously pleased to come with us himself.'

You may think that I bowed low indeed to Governor Carleton as I began my story of all that had come about that day.

At the conclusion of the tale the Governor patted me on the back and declared I had done mighty well and that my father might well be proud of his son.

Soon the four invaders were out of the cellar and on their way to the wharf between files of soldiers. Governor Carleton declared

they should be marched to Fredericton, where a time of waiting, until they could be identified with due diplomatic protocol before being conveyed across the border again, might cool their enthusiasm for adventures of invasion.

The Governor stayed an hour and when he departed left the soldiers with their lieutenant to repel any further attempt on our island. The reinforcements the American advance-guard had expected did indeed come the next day, but very promptly sheered off on seeing that we were garrisoned in force.

And that's the end of the story, save for one little thing. Some two months later there came for me a package, Geoff, a present from Governor Carleton himself. That was the little tankard you are looking at, and on it he had caused his silversmith to engrave the words you see: 'This silver commemorates Johnny's War, in which silver helped achieve a notable victory.'

Prototypes of a Brain

ERIC CROSS

AN issue raised by the accomplishments of the electronic calculators, and perhaps in the end one of greater importance than their accomplishments, is the renewed interest they have given to the subject of thought. The advent of these machines makes you think. It makes you think about thinking, and, in particular, to consider with a little more exactitude what we may mean by 'thought.'

Though these amazing machines have, in an excess of enthusiasm, been called 'electronic brains' and 'thinking-machines,' though their thousands of radio valves are compared to the myriad cells of the human brain and their recording mechanisms have been called 'memories,' they are, in fact, still no more than extremely complex calculating-machines.

They are the direct descendants of Blaise Pascal's 'arithmetic machine' of 1642, elaborated and speeded up to the almost instantaneous speed of electricity. They, like both Pascal's machine and the familiar office calculator, treat only with figures, and in this are far away from 'brains.'

For even the least of human brains does much more, much different, and much more difficult work than this. In fact, as though it regards calculation as a form of drudgery fit merely for machines, the human brain generally resents calculation. Anyway, the handling of figures is an activity which has come only lately within its ken and even still occupies only a small part of the activities of even a professional mathematician's brain.

The brain's activities are far more diverse

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and its concerns far more vital than that of a concentrated preoccupation with figures. It has to answer problems of daily and momentary living far more intricate than any mathematical problem. It has to make instantaneous judgments and assessments from much more transitory and delicate and subtle data than numbers.

The electronic brain is not yet with us and, if ever it comes, it will have had to add to its capabilities much more than that of a great facility in the 'doing of sums' before it can come near to meriting the title of 'brain' or even 'thinking-machine.'

Its future creators may have to run back to the past of more than a hundred years ago and re-explore a side avenue of knowledge which was opened up then, during the renaissance of the subject of logic.

UNTIL a hundred years or so ago logic had persisted in almost exactly the same form as that laid down by Aristotle almost two thousand years before. It had become fossilised and cumbersome in just the same way that arithmetic had been cumbersome while linked to the Roman numeral system. It needed overhauling and refashioning if it was to be of any use beyond that to which it had sunk, an almost purely academic exercise. As it was, it was quite out of touch with all the changes of knowledge which the intervening two thousand years had brought, particularly that of the increasingly important value of quantity.

The renaissance referred to was that known by the unwieldy and somewhat mystifying title of 'the quantification of the predicate.' In the Aristotelean form of logic a proposition is framed in such terms as: 'All metals are elements.' In this the subject, 'metals,' has a quantity—'all,' but the predicate, 'elements,' has none. 'The quantification of the predicate' meant no more than the addition of a term of quantity, such as 'all' or 'some' or 'any,' to the predicate. 'All metals are "some" elements.'

This change might at first sight appear to be too trivial a matter to justify the title of a 'revolution' or a 'renaissance,' but the innovation amounted to the fact that now, with both the subject and the predicate of a proposition 'quantified,' a logical proposition partook of the nature of a mathematical equation. The whole technique of mathe-

matics for treating with equations could be applied to it on the basis that 'whatever you do to one side of an equation you must do to the other.' This made the analysis, conversion, and development of a proposition much more versatile and comprehensive and gave a new lease of life to the whole subject of logic.

One of the earliest workers in the new mine of knowledge so opened up was Professor George Boole (1815-64) of the University of Cork. Primarily he was a mathematician, the first holder of the Chair of Mathematics in the recently-founded University.

In 1854 he published the book—*The Laws of Thought*—on which his increasing fame to the present day rests. In this work Boole, to quote his own words, attempted 'to investigate the fundamental laws of those operations of mind by which reasoning is performed: to give expression to them in the symbolic language of a calculus, and, upon this foundation, to establish the science of logic and construct its method: to make that method itself the basis of a general method for the application of the mathematical doctrine of probabilities: and, finally, to collect from the various elements of truth, brought to light in the course of these investigations, some probable intimation concerning the nature and constitution of the human mind.'

No less an authority upon such matters than Bertrand Russell considers that 'the laws of thought' was the outstanding discovery of that century, the 19th, in which the application of steam, the internal-combustion engine, and radium were also discoveries.

Boole was the founder of symbolic logic and present-day logistics. By his algebraisation of formal logic he made it possible to treat of reasoning in general terms, in the same way that algebra treats of numerical relations in general terms. So reasoning was released from the shackles of words and the wood of logic could be seen beyond the trees.

MANY years ago, while browsing round one of those dim, dusty bric-à-brac and junk stores which one finds in the side-streets of London, I came across a curious wooden cylinder lying on one of the shelves. It was about a foot long and inside it, mounted on an axle, revolved another wooden cylinder, which could be rotated by means of a protruding handle. The outer casing was slotted

with windows over which were marked mathematical signs, such as the plus and minus signs. Fastened to it was a label on which was written in fading ink: 'Doctor Boole's Machine.'

It was long before I had come to know anything of Boole the mathematician and logician. I asked the owner of the shop about the curious object, but he could give me no information concerning it beyond the fact that he had bought it with a lot of other odds and ends at some country sale. I replaced it on its dusty shelf again.

Then, years later, the unusual name 'Boole' cropped up once more, I believe in reference to probability, in one of Bertrand Russell's books. My interest at that time in mathematics led me naturally, and of necessity, to logic, and here again I encountered the strange name of 'Boole.'

Now aware of Boole's work, I can but believe that 'Doctor Boole's Machine' was some form of logical slide-rule or reasoning-machine, based on the technique of the laws of thought, though there is no reference to such a machine or device in any of Boole's works, including the recently-published collection of letters and papers by him—*Studies in Logic and Probability*. I imagine that, from what I now remember of the construction of the device, that the terms of the proposition, codified perhaps in letters as in algebra, were pasted or pencilled on the inner cylinder and a twist of the handle showed all the possible relations of these terms.

The device was probably the work of an enthusiastic pupil of his and has, in all likelihood, been long destroyed as rubbish. It deserved preservation in a museum of science to remind us at least that the thinking-machine is not quite so modern a notion as we tend to imagine, and perhaps also as a guide to the lines along which the construction of a truer form of thinking-machine than the electronic computers must proceed.

ANOTHER logician, Jevons, the author of many textbooks of logic, also made use of the revived quantified logic in a somewhat similar way to that in which the creator of 'Doctor Boole's Machine' had used it.

Jevons, however, went further than either Boole or his pupil in a practical direction, both devising and demonstrating a 'logic machine' before the Royal Society in 1870.

Both the machine and its operation are fully described in the Proceedings of the Royal Society for 20th January 1870.

Starting with the quantified predicate and with Boole's symbolisation or algebraisation of the terms of a proposition, Jevons used the capital letters for the affirmative terms and the lower case equivalents for the corresponding negative terms in his codification.

His logical machine consisted of a number of movable rods carrying the combinations of the code letters. At the foot of the machine were keys somewhat like those of a typewriter. The ones to the left bore the code letters, the symbols relating to the subject of a proposition, while those to the right related to the predicate of a proposition. The middle key represented the copula of the proposition.

The keys were struck in the order corresponding to the words of the premises, coded, thereby selecting and arranging the combinations of code letters so that finally only the possible or compatible ones remained on view. These were then decoded by reference to the original coding. The cumbersomeness of many words and the confusion that many affirmative and negative statements in words create was avoided. One might almost say that the finger-tips of the operator did the thinking.

Jevons claimed for this machine that 'any question could be asked of the machine and an infallible answer will be obtained from the combinations remaining on view.'

To realise the importance of this, we have only to consider how almost impossible it would be to carry out many of the everyday calculations done by a schoolboy had they still to be done in Roman numerals. The human mind could not cope with such tedious conditions. Certainly on the Roman system no calculating-machine could be made. In like manner, words alone impede the reasoning process, and the coding and algebraisation of words and terms lightens the burden of the mind in thought, releasing its energies for the actual work, the relating of terms. Equally, this coding of the terms of a proposition, together with the 'quantification of the predicate,' made possible the mechanisation of reasoning.

The possibility of this was envisaged almost a hundred years ago. With the small facilities of those days an attempt was made to put it into practice. Some day someone may return to the point where that aspect of the work on

thought left off and, with all the facilities of present-day electrical science, they may devise something which is a little nearer to what may more truly be called a 'thinking-machine' or 'logical slide-rule.'

But, even then, we will still be far away

from anything which can, with justification, be called a 'brain,' for, no matter how marvellous it may be, it will still be the product of the human brain. The electronic device which can really be called a 'brain' will be created when it creates itself—and no sooner.

Children's Encyclopedist

A Personal Recollection of Arthur Mee

SHEILA

SO many of us who daily have to answer the endless 'whys', 'whats', 'wheres', and 'whens' of children owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Arthur Mee, the Nottingham man who was inspired to produce his magnificent *Children's Encyclopedia* to answer these questions for children of all ages all over the world.

The man who produced this encyclopedia and the dozens of books, the newspaper and the magazine for children, was always too busy—and too shy—to accept the publicity for himself which the admiring world would have liked to give him. I should like to recall for a brief moment some of the very human things about Arthur Mee, which endeared him to the people who worked for him.

I joined his staff when I was nineteen. I remember in the letter which I wrote to him asking for a job I said that I had had no previous experience, and, with the immense confidence of the very young, I added that that might be an advantage—I had nothing to unlearn, and everything to learn. I am sure this remark, and the fact that my letter coincided with a vacancy on the staff, decided A.M., as we affectionately called him, to give me a chance. He always encouraged anybody who was willing to learn.

At that time he was already busily engaged on his King's England books, and I remember

how, in fear and trembling, I was sent to his hotel one day to take dictation from him. He had been away visiting some of the places about which he was writing, so that, although I had been in the office about ten days, I had not actually met the Editor. And here I was, complete with portable typewriter and notebook, aware of all my shortcomings, making my way to his hotel.

I need not have been afraid. He greeted me with his charming smile and immediately started to dictate, assuming that I would be capable, and in doing so giving me confidence.

He worked all morning, keeping a steady pace, never contradicting himself and always showing consideration for me. He expected the same consideration in return and could not bear to have the train of his thought interrupted. I soon learned that, if asked to verify some fact, it was the worst possible thing to say 'I don't know' to him. It meant that the point would have to be checked there and then and that valuable time would be lost. It was always far better to say something, and check it carefully afterwards.

On these occasions he always spotted the correction, and would comment upon it. His memory was quite fantastic. He would say that he had written an article on a certain subject and wish you to look it up. He would be able to tell you the page and the column of

the paper in which the article had appeared, as well as the date, even if it had been published several years before.

Sometimes in typing from notes I would transpose a word, and he would point it out and ask to see my shorthand notes. Sure enough, he would be right and I would be wrong. He could read shorthand—anybody's as well as his own—as easily as most people can read the printed word. He had taught himself Pitman's shorthand in a matter of a few weeks, and could write it at great speed.

WHEN I left his hotel after that first day's work, he told me that, providing my work was satisfactory, he thought we would be able to work together very well as I didn't fidget. He could not stand fidgety or dithery people. On the other hand, he was most tolerant, and would listen to anybody who came forward with an idea and would state it clearly and concisely to him. He always adopted it if he thought it a good one, but if he thought it otherwise, he would take the trouble to explain why. He could always put his finger on the weak spot.

He was one of the most immaculate men I have ever met, favouring a soft slaty-blue in the colour of his suits. This blue emphasised the colour of his eyes, his iron-grey hair, and his fresh complexion. He always gave one the impression that he had just arrived that moment freshly bathed and dressed, even after a long and arduous day at his desk.

In stature he was short and slight, his features were clear-cut, his hands capable and well-cared-for; he had the most engaging smile. His shortness was, I think, one of the things that made him shy of meeting new people.

He invariably wore a sprig of lavender in his lapel, and when he was dictating he would toy with it. No doubt the scent of it recalled his lovely Kentish garden to him as he sat on the window-seat of his London office, looking out on the Thames and the ships which sailed past.

These ships thrilled him the way they would thrill any boy. For, of course, that was A.M.'s greatest gift. Despite all his wonderful achievements, he was still able to retain that amazing childlike enthusiasm. His great friend and biographer Sir John Hammerton called him 'Child of Wonder', and no name could be more apt. He could write for

children, not because he understood them in the grown-up way, but because he knew them in their own way.

His powers of observation were as great as his feats of memory. Nothing escaped him. At one time I had decided to grow my hair to wear in a bun. The day came when I was able to achieve this small ambition, and that afternoon when A.M. was leaving the office an envelope was delivered to my desk—From The Editor. I opened it, and out fell two currants with a little note: 'For the bun'. That a man so busy as he had even noticed so personal a detail as my humble bun, and then had taken the trouble to send the office-boy out to buy the currants so that he might have his little joke, delighted me.

He was always doing the surprising thing, and loved to have a quiet little chuckle with members of his staff. But usually he did it in the way I have described, so that he himself had gone either to his home in Kent or to his London hotel before the joke was made known to the other participant.

I WENT back to work for him for a short while after I was married, and by this time I had acquired the habit of smoking. A.M. disliked smoking, particularly in women. He himself was a teetotaller and non-smoker, and he abhorred swearing. At his very crosslest on the blackest of his black Mondays, he would permit himself a mere heartfelt 'fiddle faddle'. How he learned that I smoked, I do not know. But one day I found a present of a hundred cigarettes on my desk with the admonition: 'Players—*please* not here!' A fine example of his kindly tolerance.

He had the gift so many talented people seem to have of being able to take a cat-nap. He would put himself to sleep in his office with a gentle plea not to be disturbed for ten minutes. He had disciplined himself so well that after ten minutes exactly he would be awake and ready to continue for hours.

And like so many people who can do things well themselves, A.M. was impatient. It was said of him once that he liked everything done yesterday. He was at his most impatient on a Monday morning. It seemed to me that he would arrive at the office earlier on a Monday than any other day of the week. Then he would put his hand right across the buzzers on his desk, and unless the whole staff materialised, like the genie from Aladdin's

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lamp, he would pace up and down the office. The poor unfortunate who did appear would bear the brunt for the whole staff. But his storm was soon over, and he would invariably do some gracious thing for that member by way of an apology, for he hated injustice more than any other thing.

He hated disorder, too, and his own desk was always a model of tidiness. He told me he could not work unless it was so. His whole office had the same feeling of order and good-taste. He loved beautiful things and hated mediocrity in any form, and would speak out against it whenever he met with it.

We were on the whole a healthy lot on his staff, thanks largely to the comfort we enjoyed in our offices, and I do not remember that we suffered much from the sniffles. I certainly do not remember the Editor ever having a cold. Yet he had an absolute phobia about the common cold. At the slightest suggestion of a sneeze from somebody, A.M. would say: 'Do you think so-and-so has a cold?' and, before one could answer 'No,' he had swallowed a quinine tablet. How many of these tablets he consumed, I hate to think. He usually followed the quinine tablet with a piece of his favourite cream chocolate, which he shared with whoever happened to be in his office. Thank goodness he never expected us to swallow the quinine tablets.

ON the morning of my twenty-first birthday I received a handsome present from A. M. and a beautiful letter which I shall always treasure:

My dear Sheila,

So nobodies become somebodies if you wait long enough.

I am growing old and you are growing

young. I am growing tired and you are the spirit of energy and youth. I am in the past and you are in the future. You will grow more and more responsible, and I less and less; you more serious and I more playful: it is the way Life's see-saw goes. I hope the game will keep us together for a year or two till some thief comes to take you away to his Castle of Delight, and then I wish for you a happiness beyond all words.

A long long Youth, unfailing health, a heart as buoyant as a little ship full-sail, a mind keen and alert, a soul that shrinks from the touch of injustice and wrong—may all these be yours till you say good-bye to me, and then for a long long time.

I will say a little prayer for you to-night that Life will open its richest and fairest casket for you, and that all your dreams may come true in this world that is going to be so beautiful again.

With much affection,
A.M.

It is not surprising that A.M. inspired his staff with some of his own enthusiasm, though his unbounding energy and capacity for work left many of us, younger than him in years, wilting by the wayside.

I spoke to him on the telephone the day before he went to the hospital. I wanted to offer him my heart to hold in his hand, as he had once offered me his when I was going to have an operation. He said to me: 'There is nothing to worry about. I am very happy. My desk is clear. My work is all done.'

I wonder if his work is all done. It seems to me that it goes on being done, every day. Wherever there is a child learning of the wonderful things in the world through the words of Arthur Mee, his work is still being done. Perhaps that is what he meant.

Triolet

*I never thought we'd part, dear,
Just because I trumped your ace.
Though it put you in the cart, dear,
I never thought we'd part, dear—
I was so sure your heart, dear,
Was in quite a different place.
I never thought we'd part, dear,
Just because I trumped your ace.*

E. M. E. W.



A Lot o' Money

ROSEMARY WEIR

LITTLE Jennifer Mennear straightened her aching back, cast an anxious look at her younger brother Sam on the other side of the box-mangle, and then glanced wistfully across the yard to where, through the wash-house door, she could see the warm, comforting glow of the kitchen lamp. Warmth lay beyond that light, warmth and the good smell of hot soup. Jennifer brought her eyes back with difficulty to the cold little wash-house and the mangle, and the piles of clothes and the tired little boy. She sighed, and the two children bent to the handles again, and the stones inside the box went rumble, rumble, and over and above the noise of the mangle came the incessant tumble and surge of the sea.

'Water!' thought Jennifer, as she fed another sheet-wrapped bundle of wet clothes into the mangle. 'There's a bit too much water in my life.' The thought amused her and she elaborated: 'Washing water, all frothy like the sea in a storm, and blue water for rinsing like the sea on a summer's day. It was water took my Dad away, and it's water keeps my Mam so busy and makes her tired—and me too.' The child picked up another bundle and looked at it with disgust. 'Mrs Kitto's, I know, and more than she oughter as usual.

I'll charge her an extra ha'penny, you see if I won't,' she vowed, and fed the bundle into the mangle with vicious jerks of her small hands.

In Portgerran, in the year 1902, if you 'took in mangling' you charged one penny a bundle for the work, and a bundle was understood to contain a score of articles, rolled neatly in a sheet. That was the rule, made sacred by custom. But if you stooped to sharp practice, then nothing was easier than to slip in a few more handkerchiefs, or even a towel or two, and then your bundle became swollen and the work of mangling doubly hard.

Jennifer and her brother took both hands to the work, their small faces grew red with effort, and old Mrs Kitto's bundle was through.

The girl sighed with relief. 'Go on, Sam,' she said, stooping to place the bundle in a large basket by her side. 'Get on to bed. I'll tidy up. Be over soon, tell Mam.' The little boy scuttled off thankfully and Jennifer put a clean cloth over the top of the basket, then carefully pinched out the stub of candle and picked her way through the puddles and drips to the back-door. As she put her hand on the latch the door was opened from inside, and a rush of warmth came out to greet her.

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She stepped eagerly into the tiny kitchen, edged past her mother and crouched down by the glowing bars of the fire.

MRS MENNEAR glanced sharply at the small face wizened with cold and tiredness, and said with unaccustomed gentleness: 'You look worn out, m'dear, and it's nearly ten o'clock, and Sam's gone up to bed. By rights I shouldn't let you work so late, but that mangling simply had to be done. I'm just about through with the first lot of ironing and you can take it round before school tomorrow.'

Jennifer sat back on her heels and fixed her mother with a look of intense determination. 'Mam,' she said, 'I'm going to charge old Mrs Kitto a ha'penny extra for her bundle this week. It's not fair—each week she puts in more. I nearly break my arms getting her great bundle through. Penny ha'penny—that's what it's worth, and that's what she'll pay!'

Her mother heard her out in silence and then leant towards her across the table which was piled high with crisply-ironed linen. 'You'll do nothing of the sort Jenny, my girl. Penny a bundle's my price and that's what you'll charge her. Maybe she does put in a bit more than she ought—the old skinflint—but she's a regular customer and I'm not going out of my way to offend her. Ha'penny's a lot o' money, my girl, and don't you forget it.'

'Ain't likely to forget it,' muttered Jennifer mutinously. 'Work hard enough to earn it, anyway. But fair's fair, and she *ought* to pay a ha'penny more, and I'm going to ask her to.'

Mrs Mennear aimed a swinging blow at the child's head, but Jennifer, with the skill of long practice, evaded it.

'Say no more about it,' ordered her mother, 'but drink up your soup and get to bed. After ten now, and you must be up early to take round the washing. Be quick now.'

Jennifer gulped down her soup in silence, and in silence crept upstairs. She negotiated the bed on the narrow landing where Sam slept, tiptoed into the room where, in two beds standing foot to foot, the three younger children lay, and finally wriggled carefully into one of them by the side of her plump little sister Lil. She relaxed her aching limbs with a sigh and arranged herself for sleep. Then her eyes opened again, her hands clenched on

the blankets and in a tone of the utmost resolution she whispered: 'Another ha'penny! Fair's fair,' and so saying, fell asleep.

THE next morning was cold and sleety, with a cutting east wind blowing in from the sea. Huge waves hurled themselves against the little jetty and broke in clouds of spray which drenched Jennifer to the skin as she struggled along the Lugger with her heavy basket of washing. Head held low, petticoats billowing, she leant against the wind, forcing her way finally inch by inch into the comparative shelter of the Kitto back-porch.

Jennifer set down her basket, wiped her streaming face, tied down her dark hair more firmly with her soaking shawl, and knocked at the door. An observant listener might have detected a note of defiance in that knock. It was not the timid tapping of the washer-woman's little daughter, it was the firm rat-a-tat of a person on a crusade, a person with right on her side. She waited, while her heart went thump, thump, and was echoed inside the house by the thump, thump of old Mrs Kitto's slippered feet coming slowly down the stairs. The door opened and the old lady peered round it, drawing her thick grey shawl more closely round her body as she felt the keen edge of the wind. She was not a pleasant old lady. She looked unclean, and from a great mole on her chin hairs sprouted darkly. She took in the child on her doorstep, the heavy basket, and the chill, wild morning before she spoke. 'Oh, it's you,' she said at last. 'All right, all right, bring the bundle in and put it down. No, not there, not there—over *here*. Now where's my purse? Oh dear, oh dear, where's my purse?'

'It's on the dresser Mrs Kitto,' ventured Jennifer as the old woman muttered and mumbled her way round the room. Time was passing, and if she was late for school Jennifer would get the strap.

The old lady shot her a sharp look and pounced on her purse as if to save it from attack. 'All right, all right, I *know*,' she said. 'Oh dear, oh dear, I've only got a threepenny-bit. How can I give you a penny when I've only got a threepenny-bit? Better call again, child, call again.'

Jennifer took a deep breath. 'It's penny ha'penny you owe this week Mrs Kitto, ma'am,' she said. 'Larger bundle than

usual, more than a score in it this time, ma'am. Penny ha'penny it'll be. I can give you change for your threepenny,' and she boldly held out a penny and a halfpenny in her chilly little palm.

The old woman glanced sharply at the small, determined figure, made as if to speak, shut her lips again, and then held out the precious silver threepenny-piece.

Jennifer's heart gave a wild leap and she thrust the penny and halfpenny into the old, wrinkled hand, grasped the threepenny-bit, and backed to the door. 'Thank you very much, Mrs Kitto, ma'am,' she said breathlessly, and turned and ran for it.

ALL day in school Jennifer gloated over her victory. The threepenny-bit, tied in a corner of her handkerchief, made a small, exciting lump in her pocket. She fingered it a hundred times before four o'clock brought release from school. With her brothers and sisters she ran down the long hill towards home, exulting now in the harsh wind which came to them, full of the cries of gulls, from the sea.

It wasn't until the cottage door was reached that uneasiness crept in. She'd been clever, a good business woman, and she was in the right, but would Mother think so? She'd said don't ask, but Jennifer had reckoned that, when the deed was done and the extra ha'penny safely in her grasp, disapproval would be swallowed up in thankfulness and, yes, admiration. But now, on the threshold, she didn't feel so sure.

She went in. Tea was on the table and a glorious smell of baking permeated the tiny house. Mother was in the kitchen and seemed in a good temper. 'Well, my handsome,' she greeted Jennifer. 'Come and have your tea, but first give me the washing-money. I must run over to the shop for a penn'oth of starch before they shut.'

Slowly Jennifer untied the handkerchief and laid the coins on the table.

One by one her mother picked them up. 'Penny from Mrs Penrose, tuppence from Mrs Retallick, penny from—why, what's this threepenny doing? You've a ha'penny too much by my reckoning?' She looked up sharply. 'You didn't—you never—why, Jennifer, child, you *never* asked old Mrs Kitto for the extra ha'penny, did you?'

Jennifer nodded. Her throat felt tight and

tears pricked her eyes, but she spoke up bravely enough. 'I did,' she said. 'Fair's fair, Mam, and she puts too much in her bundle—you know she does. Ha'penny extra this week, Mrs Kitto, I says, and she pays me and says nothing. I reckon she knew I was right.'

Mrs Mennear was silent. Slowly she picked up a ha'penny from the little pile of coins on the table and held it out to the child. 'Take it,' she commanded, 'and go straight back and give it to the old lady. A ha'penny's a lot of money, and God knows we need every copper we can get, but I've never overcharged a customer yet, and I'm not going to begin now. Tell her it was a mistake and you're sorry. Go on—get along.' She moved swiftly round the table, her hand upraised, and Jennifer shot past her and out into the cold dusk, clutching the ha'penny and sobbing a little under her breath.

JENNIFER ran all the way to Mrs Kitto's house and banged on the door as if wolves were behind her.

Old Mrs Kitto rose grumblingly from her seat before the hot fire, laid down her plate of hot buttered toast, and opened the door. 'Oh, it's you again,' she began, but got no further. She saw a small furious figure, arm upraised, and heard something tinkle to the ground at her feet.

'There's your ha'penny,' shouted an angry little voice, 'there's your beastly ha'penny!' And as old Mrs Kitto stood transfixed with amazement, out of the fast-gathering dark came the parting shot: 'Take it. It's a lot o' money, and I can see you need it more than me!'

There was a moment's silence as the old woman and the little girl stared at each other with set faces while the sound of the waves on the breakwater and the cries of the gulls surged over and around them. Then the old woman's face broke into a grim, unwilling smile and she opened the door a little wider. 'So that's what you think of me, is it?' she said. 'Well, you've got pluck if you haven't got manners. Come inside—hurry now,' she ordered testily as Jennifer hung back on the doorstep. 'I can't stand here in the draught all night to suit your ladyship!'

Jennifer timidly ventured into the warm kitchen and the door slammed behind her, cutting off retreat.

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'Now,' said old Mrs Kitto, 'we'll have a little talk about this. Sit down there—no, wait, get that mug off the dresser. I'm having my tea, and you can have a cup too. No, no, not the pink mug—trust you to pick the best. That old brown one with the chip. That's right, and here's a bit o' toast for you. Now sit down and for any sake don't keep on dodging about. You make me giddy, you do indeed.'

Jennifer found herself ensconced in front of the hot fire, a scalding mug of sweet tea in one hand and a regular doorstep of buttered toast in the other. She eyed Mrs Kitto curiously over the rim of the mug and wondered what would happen next.

The old lady seemed in no hurry to enlighten her. She sipped her tea noisily, mumbled her toast, and stared at Jennifer. At last she spoke: 'So it's a lot o' money, eh, ha'penny is? Worth quarrelling with a good customer over, is it?'

Jennifer blushed, and nodded, and the old lady went on: 'Things bad at home, eh? Speak up, child. Don't mumble. I'm hard of hearing. Times hard, eh?'

'They've always been hard that I remember,' said Jennifer at last, 'ever since Dad went, that is.'

'Yer mother should never have married him,' pronounced old Mrs Kitto dispassionately, and Jennifer sat up with a jerk. 'Warned her often enough, I did, but she wouldn't listen no more than the wind. If she'd married my boy as I bid her, she'd have been mistress of a snug little farm and have her husband alive to this day. But no, my lady must have Anthony Mennear, and she had him, and much good it's done her.' She muttered under her breath, and took another noisy sup of tea.

'Did you,' ventured Jennifer, 'did you *know* my Mam when she was young? She never said so to me.'

Old Mrs Kitto cackled, and brushed the toast crumbs from her ample bosom. 'Know her?' she said. 'Aye, I knew her. Own niece to my husband's brother's wife. Why shouldn't I know her? She were the prettiest girl in Portgerran then, and the men were after her like bees round a hive, and she should have taken my boy who was the best of them all. But no, she wouldn't have him. And what's come of it? She takes in mangling for a living and a ha'penny's a lot o' money to her.'

Jennifer flushed up again, this time with indignation. 'My Dad was a fine man,' she cried.

'All right, spitfire,' said the old woman. 'I'm not speaking ill of the dead, and you've no need to fly at me like a tiger because I say what I think. Now eat up your toast and listen to me. Thursday's your Mam's birthday, ain't it?'

Jennifer, amazed, said: 'How did you know?'

Mrs Kitto made an impatient gesture. 'I've told you I've known her since she was a girl. Now stop chattering and come with me. Put your mug in the sink. Oh dear, oh dear, the crumbs! Here take this brush and sweep them under the fire. Mess, mess everywhere where there's childer. Now then come on—come on.'

OBEDIENTLY Jennifer followed her hostess into the wash-house adjoining the kitchen. Mrs Kitto led the way with a stump of candle to where, in a corner, some large object stood covered with sacking. This she removed, muttering to herself all the while, then turned to Jennifer and beckoned her forward, the stump of candle held high. By the light of its feeble glow the child saw a magnificent mangle, not the ancient box-mangle of her own home, but the most modern thing in mangles, its smooth wooden rollers set in a strong iron stand, the bright red and blue paint of the framework still fresh and unchipped. It was a wonder of ingenuity. Jennifer gaped at it with awe.

'Pretty, ain't it?' said old Mrs Kitto. 'Never been used, you see. My son give it to me a year ago, but I've never used it. Too much for an old woman like me. Easier to send my mangling out, even if it does cost me a penny a week!' She cackled again and shot a sideways glance at Jennifer. 'Now,' she said, 'I don't want the thing. It's in the way, and I want to put my sticks in that corner. Go down to Mr Chenoueth and tell him from me to bring his handcart here in the morning. Tell him there's something to go down to yer Mam's house—a birthday present like,' and she looked at Jennifer again.

Jennifer stared back at her, her mouth open. 'It's—it's very kind of you, Mrs Kitto,' she stammered at last, 'and it 'ud make all the difference to us—get the work

WHEN DID YOU LAST SEE YOUR FATHER?

done in half the time, but we couldn't pay you, ma'am—'

Mrs Kitto cut her short. 'Pay!' she snapped. 'Who's asking you to pay? Can't I give my own husband's brother's wife's niece a present for her birthday without being insulted by a chit of a girl? Though, mind you,' she added with a shrewd look at Jennifer, 'you'll do my mangling free from now on, eh—eh?' She gave the child a not unkindly push. 'Oh, get on now, get on home, and don't forget to call in at Mr Chenoueth's.'

Jennifer stammered her thanks and was let out at the back-door into the inky-black night. She felt her way cautiously down the alleyway between the cottages until she came into the feeble light cast by the street-lamp.

The wind howled and moaned around her, tugging at her shawl, the sea pounded on the rocks below. She stood for a minute leaning on the sea-wall and gazing across the dark, heaving water, her face transfigured with happiness. Then she turned into the teeth of the wind and made for home at the top of her speed.

Inside the cottage old Mrs Kitto returned to the kitchen and grovelled under the table for the despised and forgotten ha'penny. Retrieving it, she sank heavily into her chair before the fire and spoke her thoughts aloud. 'I'm a soft old fool,' she said, 'but there, it wasn't no good to me, and I shall save a penny a week. And that's a lot o' money,' she said and cackled again.

When Did You Last See Your Father?

A Tragic Footnote to a Famous Painting

BRIDGET OCEY

IF they have not actually seen the original painting, most people have at some time or other seen a replica of Yeames's picture 'When Did You Last See Your Father?', perhaps on a calendar or a picture-postcard, or in wax at Madame Tussaud's, and they will remember the blue-clad little Cavalier boy standing defiantly before the questioning Roundhead.

There is a poem written around the episode depicted in the painting, and in that the lad answers that his father came to him the night before—in a dream. The last time the flesh-and-blood little boy was with his father was no dream—it was living nightmare. He was the nephew of the artist, who had adopted him some years earlier when as a tiny baby he was orphaned by the tragic events here recorded.

THE British government official, his wife, and baby son were travelling from Moscow to St Petersburg by horse-sleigh. To-morrow there would be four or five more hours to ride before they reached the capital, but to-night their one desire was to come to the warmth and shelter of the village inn before the moon set in an hour's time.

The scene was like a severe black and white woodcut, the clear moonlight picking out every object, large or small, and throwing its enlarged silhouette across the white canvas of snow. The silence was enhanced rather than broken by the sounds of the sleigh-runners on the crisp snow, the regular muffled thuds of the horses' hooves, and the silvery tinkles of the sleigh-bells hanging from arches over the horses' necks. Occasionally the husband and wife spoke—occasionally a wolf-

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howl cut terrifyingly across the silence.

Then the baby stirred in his mother's arms and whimpered. His father said: 'It sounds as though young Billie won't be sorry to stretch himself—he looks like a cocoon in all those wraps. Well, dears, it won't be much longer now. You can see the wood on the hillside and once we have climbed up there we shall be able to see the village below,' and he whipped up the horses as they came towards the foot of the climb through the woods.

The howls of the wolves increased. About halfway up the hill the woman looked back. A pack of wolves was padding along some distance behind them. 'Keep an eye on them, dear, and if they get much nearer I will shoot one—that will keep them quiet,' said her husband. A few minutes later he fired, and the rest of the pack stopped to tear at the flesh of the fallen wolf.

IT was at this point that a lone wolf crossed the road in front of the horses. The animals panicked, and one broke away and raced up the hill, neighing shrilly. Instantly a pack of wolves flowed out from the wood ahead and attacked the terrified beast. With difficulty the remaining horses were quietened. There followed a hurried consultation in the sleigh, after which the mother put down the child and knelt on the seat beside him with the gun ready to fire at the wolves, who had by this time left the carcase of the shot animal and had taken up the trail of the sleigh.

The father stepped down and, holding the head of the leading horse so that he was between it and the terrifying sight of the pack savagely battling over the runaway horse, he whipped up the team and, racing alongside,

he got the equipage safely past and on the way up the hill.

His wife fired three or four times, and the sounds of the snarling beasts was appalling. Even so, they might have reached safety, but as the father looked ahead he saw waiting just on the brow of the hill another pack of wolves. The horses saw or sensed the danger and, tried beyond endurance, they reared and plunged until they broke their harness and galloped off into the woods.

The man and his wife faced certain death with marvellous courage, and the future—the life of their little son—was their only thought. They kissed him tenderly, and as the father held him the child looked into his father's face for the last time.

In feverish haste they buried the baby deep in wraps in the bottom of the sleigh, putting his head under the seat so that he could breathe. They lashed down the wrappings with ropes and the remains of the harness, piled baggage on top, and then, firing until their ammunition was gone, they walked steadfastly up the hill towards the waiting pack and away from the baby boy in the sleigh.

NEXT morning the first villagers from the valley came upon the remains of the man and his wife. They called up help from the village. The priest, innkeeper, farmers, they all came, and, following the trail of carcases, human, horse, and wolf, and studying the marks of the sleigh, they had no difficulty in tracing the story of the night of horror.

Finally, they turned to the sleigh. From the depths of the protecting heaps of luggage and wraps came the cry of a hungry baby.

Winter Wish

*Ah, if only I could write
A poem like this lovely night,
This lovely night of frost and snow,
With all the stars a glittering show,
And every bush and every tree
Transformed by winter's wizardry,
While up above the moon rides high,
A silver world within the sky.
But I can only wish to write,
And gaze in wonder and delight.*

J. MACKAY.

Hotel Porter

ANDREW KER

IN these days of economic insecurity, changing one's job in middle age might be likened to the changing of horses in mid-stream of an earlier day. When, however, circumstances are favourable, a change of jobs can be a stimulating experience.

Last summer I found myself in one of the larger Cornish holiday resorts, with the prospect of several weeks' unemployment owing to an unforeseeable lag between resigning one position and taking up the new one. The prospect did not appeal to me, and I decided to look for work. So, after a discussion with my wife, who was busy decorating our new home, and therefore would be quite pleased at the idea of getting me off the premises, I called at the local office of the Ministry of Labour.

'An accountant,' mused the clerk on duty, and, accepting me as a fellow of the white collar brotherhood, said: 'Nothing much doing in our line, I'm afraid. Plenty of seasonal hotel jobs,' he added with an apologetic grin, implying that they weren't quite the kind of work for chaps like us.

I pressed him for details, saying that I would like a change from office work. He told me something of the duties of a hall-porter and also a kitchen-porter, and primed with this new-found knowledge I headed for home.

I had leanings towards a kitchen-porter's job, for in my ignorance I considered that this would require less experience than a hall-porter's. I had always been rather afraid of the slick efficiency of the hall-porters I had previously encountered. Behind the scenes in the kitchen I would be less embarrassed by observers and there the risk of meeting some of my former acquaintances as guests would be considerably less.

With some enthusiasm I told my wife of my intention of seeking a kitchen-porter's job, rounding off my observations by declaiming that I was an efficient and experienced potato-

peeler—'You should have seen me peeling spuds in the sergeants' mess, tubs and tubs of them. "Spud barbering," we called it.'

For a few moments she regarded me in silence, then she said: 'Why did you never tell me that before?'

By the time I had finished peeling the last potato for our dinner I had resolved to present myself at the XYZ Hotel the following morning and to offer myself for the vacancy of kitchen-porter.

AS I opened the door and walked across the hotel lounge towards the reception-desk, the two proprietors, who had had their heads together over a chatty cup of tea, broke like boxers from a clinch and awaited my arrival at the window with welcoming smiles. I was not unduly flattered by this attention, for the holiday season had hardly begun and most hotels had still many empty rooms.

The smiles of welcome vanished, and were replaced by amused grins, when I said: 'I hear you are looking for staff.'

'Which job did you have in mind—the kitchen-porter or the hall-porter?' they asked.

'Oh, the kitchen-porter,' I replied, and proceeded to tell them something about myself.

'We'll have a talk with the chef,' they said, and disappeared to consult that power behind the swing-doors of the kitchen.

They were gone some time, during which I read the hotel brochure, looking round the lounge every now and then to make sure that I was in the same place. I was soon joined by three dachshunds, which lolled at my feet inviting my attention. The brochure, I noticed, said: 'Dogs are not allowed on the hotel premises.'

At length the proprietors came back again. 'Chef would prefer someone with experience for his job,' they announced, 'but if you

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like you could start to-morrow as hall-porter.'

'What do I do?'

'Start at seven and I'll arrange for one of the girls to show you the ropes. The main thing is to have the place cleaned before the guests come down for breakfast. After that you will make yourself generally useful. You'll wear black trousers and a white coat.'

I went home to look out the trousers belonging to my tropical dinner-suit, last worn when I was a New Guinea public servant before the war. For a white coat the nearest I had was a Saigon linen jacket.

AT ten minutes to seven the next morning I was making my way along the promenade, musing that only a little more than a week ago I had been catching a London No. 9 bus to take me to the office. Here I was meandering past the deserted bathing-boxes at a popular Cornish seaside resort. I chuckled to myself and the squawking gulls overhead seemed to be sharing my amusement.

Doreen didn't beat about the bush. 'The first thing to do,' she said, 'is to clean out the fires—that is, if they have been used the night before. Paper and sticks are in the boilerhouse and the coke is in the shed at the back. The bucket and brushes are in the cupboard under the stairs. See that you put them back where you found them, for if you don't, the night-porter will be after your blood.' She paused for breath and looked at me to see my reaction.

'And then?' I managed to ask with exaggerated enthusiasm.

'Oh, but before you do that,' continued Doreen, 'you will have to clean out the kitchen fires and stoke them up for the chef. You mustn't forget them. Then you'll light the two geysers—I'll show them to you afterwards. They are for the morning teas. Then give the kitchen-porter in No. 12 a call. Then you start on the fires, as I was saying.'

'After you have done the fires, you will polish the hall and lounge; mop the boards each day and polish every other day. When you have nothing to do, give the grand-piano a go over with some furniture-cream. Use the vacuum on the carpets. Don't brush them. They are new. Let the nap tread in, see? It makes them last longer.'

'What time in the morning will it be now,' I asked with a smile.

'Wait, m'dear,' she replied. 'You've a lot more to do and be into your glad-rags before

the guests come down between eight and nine for breakfast.'

'Go on,' I murmured, feeling physically weaker as she recited off each task.

'And I forgot the boots. Don't forget the boots, or the guests will complain to the manager. There won't be many. The polish is in that little cupboard near the stairs. Then you'll clean down the stairs to the first landing—the girls are responsible for the rest. Then you'll do the cocktail bar, and by that time it will be nearly breakfast-time and you have to be getting into your white coat and be ready to do what the management asks you—carry bags up and down or go to the town for supplies that have been overlooked.'

With that she left me to it.

I MANAGED to get through all my tasks by the time the first bell went. But it was hard going, and as I mopped my brow after polishing the floor surrounds I smiled at the thought of my erstwhile office colleagues being able to see me now.

After breakfast I hung around in the hall in my black trousers and Saigon linen jacket waiting to be called and beckoned, and wondering if I would have the nerve to accept a tip if one were offered to me. But apart from exchanging a bow here and there with the lady guests and a 'Good-morning, sir' with some of the males, no one seemed to want me.

Later the manager called me. 'Several guests have been asking if we have a hall-porter on duty,' he grunted. 'It's that jacket of yours,' he complained, eyeing me with disapproval. 'You look too much like a guest. Change it for this white coat. You'll have to put tucks in the sleeve and get your missus to fix it up with some buttons.' After that there were no mistakes.

In a week I had become used to the work and enjoyed hurrying through my strict routine of duties and trying to be finished before the bell rang. I was quite reconciled to completing the season at my new calling, and the tips were increasing daily, but in the fourth week I had a call to report for duty with my firm, and as the cobbler must stick to his last, so must the accountant stick to his accounts.

It was with genuine regret that I said farewell to the hotel staff and exchanged the white jacket for the black coat of the office-worker.



A Housemaster's Case-Book

VI.—Yovan Stilović

EVERETT BARNES

Curse on all laws but those that love has made.
DRYDEN.

I HAVE had only a few foreigners in my House. As one of them was Yovan Stilović, I may be thought to have had my share; yet I would not gladly have missed him.

Yovan was the son of a wealthy Serbian business man and a French mother. His parents lived a cosmopolitan sort of life, taking Yovan round with them in their wanderings over Europe and never bothering much about the suitability of his environment. M. Stilović was an ardent Anglophil and had decided that an English public-school would equip Yovan for the battle of life better than any education to be obtained on the Continent. When the boy arrived for his first term at Melbury, escorted by a Cook's agent who had brought him across the Channel, to my horror and dismay he was clad in a neat sailor-suit and socks.

Thus the very first appearance of Yovan Stilović presented a problem; and thereafter in my four years of responsibility for the boy problems were never far distant. Obviously

if he were let loose in the House in that garb it would take him years to live it down. By good fortune he had arrived very early—to enable the escort to start back at once for Belgrade or somewhere—and had probably not been observed, so that the situation was not irretrievably lost. I asked him whether he had an ordinary suit.

'Pleass?' he replied.

'I say, have you an ordinary suit, like the one I am wearing?'

'Yess?'

'You brought your trunk with you?'

'Pleass?'

'Where is your box, containing your clothes?'

'No?'

I soon gathered something which the Stilović parents had omitted to mention—that Yovan could not speak a word of English, or rather, he could speak three words, 'Yes,' 'No,' and 'Please,' all used with an interrogative inflexion and meaning the same thing: 'I don't understand a word you're saying. Kindly repeat.'

I handed Yovan over to Elinor, my wife, before any other arrivals could catch him,

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asking her to incarcerate the boy on the private side of the house and get the Matron to go through his luggage. If no more orthodox suit was found, Yovan was to be put to bed instantly in one of our spare bedrooms and kept there until such time as one of us could find a moment to buy him another outfit—which could not possibly be before the next day.

Yovan had to remain in bed, more or less, from early that afternoon till well on the next morning. I say 'more or less,' because one of the first things we discovered about him was that he did not interpret too literally any order or regulation which appeared to him superfluous.

He was a sturdy little boy, with a dark skin, a large mouth, which was generally smiling, and eyes which were at once honest and full of mischief. 'Stilo' was an immediate success in the House. If he could neither understand English nor make himself understood, he could at least laugh in a manner that was completely intelligible. He was bilingual in Serbian and French, and learnt English with extraordinary speed. Having no home worth speaking of, Stilo did not suffer from homesickness, nor from any of the ordinary new boy's apprehensions; he was his natural independent self from the start, and even boys of exalted station allowed him to be so, regarding him as a peculiar case, exempt from the usual discouragements.

He very soon began to earn the special regard which is reserved for the confirmed law-breaker. But Stilo was quite unspoilt by this kind of popular esteem; he did not break rules in a spirit of bravado or to show off, but partly in genuine ignorance, and partly because he had lived much with adults who had no truck with petty restrictions on behaviour. When he was pulled up for an offence, his attitude was always disarming: he would either admit his error with complete candour, or plead genuine ignorance of the law, or plead ignorance with an over-seriousness which, as his eyes showed, he did not expect you to take seriously. He was completely without vice, and never lied to get out of his difficulties without admitting you to the secret of his lie. Punishment produced in him no sense of injury, and Monitors before long began to turn a blind eye to his lesser misdeeds because nothing they could do to him seemed to make much difference, and he was never truculent or contumacious.

MY first serious defeat at his hands was concerned with a cat. Boys in the House were only allowed to keep pets under special restrictions, and obviously cats and dogs could not be tolerated at all unless the House were to become a menagerie. But Stilo was devoted to animals, and in his second term he attracted to himself a stray cat. That might happen to anyone; but a point was reached when it became doubtful whether this cat had not ceased to be a stray and become a piece of personal property.

My House Captain mentioned it to me one night. 'We shall have to do something about Stilo and his cat, sir. It's beginning to follow him round like a dog.'

'What does he say about it?'

'His English seems to go right back when cats are mentioned. But from what I can understand, it comes into the Day Room whenever a window is opened.'

'Does he feed the animal?'

'I asked him that, sir, but I couldn't quite make out what his answer was.'

I said I would see the boy, and sent for him next day. 'Do I understand, Stilović, that you're keeping a cat?'

'Pleass?'

'Are you keeping a cat?'

Stilo looked completely baffled. 'What you say—keeping, sare?'

I tried French, which is not one of my languages. '*On dit que vous avez un chat.*'

Stilo glowed with comprehension. '*Mais non, m'sieur,*' and he launched into explanations so fluent that I was left standing.

I told him to wait, and went to see if my House Assistant, Bister, who was a modern linguist, was in his room. I found him and brought him along as interpreter. 'Now,' I said to him, 'charge the boy with harbouring a domestic pet, to wit a cat, contrary to all regulations.'

At the end of a longish exchange in French, Bister reported: 'He says it's not his cat and he can't get rid of it. He has shushed it and made faces at it, but it won't go away.'

'Ask him if he knows that cats are not allowed in the Day Room.'

A further exchange, then: 'He says it's not his fault if the cat comes in at the window. He puts it out, but it always comes back. He adds that it is unhealthy to keep the window always shut.'

'Ask him if he feeds the beast.'

'He says he has fed it, but only when it is

A HOUSEMASTER'S CASE-BOOK

so hungry that it might die in the Day Room if he didn't give it something.'

'Tell him he is never to feed it again whether it is dying or not.'

'He says he is very sorry if he has done wrong, but in his country boys are taught to be kind to animals.'

'Tell him not to browbeat me, and that if he ever sees the cat in the House again he is to report it to a Monitor at once.'

That was the best I could do, and a very poor best, as I was well aware. Of course the cat continued to come into the Day Room and to follow Stilo round, and I have no doubt he continued to feed it. Once or twice, as a concession to law and order, Stilo reported the presence of the cat in the Day Room to a Monitor. The Monitor would turn the cat out and shut the window; soon after he had gone somebody would open the window and the cat would come in again.

Before long the Day Room began to smell of cat, and I once found the animal locked in there at night. It was now time for an ultimatum. I summoned Stilo and got hold of Bister to interpret. 'Tell him,' I said, 'that this has gone on long enough. If the cat appears in the House again, I'll have it put to sleep.'

When Stilo was acquainted with this sentence, he said nothing but started crying quietly.

'Ask him if he can make sure the cat doesn't come into the House again.'

The reply came through: 'He can't stop the cat from coming in, but he wants to know if he can buy it from you to save its life. He also says that in his country boys are taught to be kind to animals.'

This was the last time I used Bister as interpreter—he evidently enjoyed it too much. After the interview things went on exactly the same as before, except that Stilo no longer reported the cat when it came into the Day Room.

With only a week or so of the term to run, I bribed our charlady to abduct the cat and feed it luxuriously at my expense till the end of term. Then I told Stilo he could take it away with him provided he never brought it within a hundred miles of Melbury again. Stilo's understanding of English improved again at once and he accepted the offer with rapture. At the end of term he left happily with the cat in his arms. I didn't inquire into its future history.

IN the next few terms Stilo made rapid progress. He was intelligent and industrious, and his English became fluent. Everybody liked him and he began to show the makings of an outstanding scrum-half. If he was frequently on the wrong side of the law, he generally got away with it and was never in serious trouble. When he was about seventeen he arrived back one term on a very new motor-bicycle. This was reported to me, and my spirits fell. I sent for Stilo at once. 'I hear you've brought a motor-bicycle back with you, Stilo.'

'Yes, sir. A present from my father.'

'You know that the riding of motor-bicycles in term-time is strictly forbidden?'

Stilo's eyes opened in amazement. 'Is that really true, sir? In my contry boys are encoraged—'

'I don't want to hear anything about your country, Stilo. You forget that you are now living in a civilised society.'

Stilo chuckled, as he always did at good-natured gibes about his nationality—unless tactical reasons required him to show offence.

'What have you done with it now?' I asked.

'I tried to put it in my stoddy, sir, but it is just too beeg. So I leaved it in the passage.'

'Stilo, you will take that infernal machine to a garage this moment, and never set eyes on it again till the last day of term.'

Stilo looked very depressed.

'And if you are seen riding it before the end of term,' I went on, 'there will be no choice but to report you to the Head. Do you understand?'

'Yes, sir. I onderstand I most not be seen riding it before the end of term.'

His look as he went away made me feel like an accomplice; it conveyed so plainly that he was almost certain to ride his motor-bike during the term, because no sane person could expect such a silly little rule to be strictly observed. I could only hope that he would be successful in not being seen.

I don't know how often Stilo used the machine during the term—probably not very often, because his many interests in the school would have left him little time. Towards the end of the term he was absent from Chapel one Sunday evening. This was reported to me as a matter of routine, but it was an offence for which he would have to answer to the Head. I decided to take no action until the Head had dealt with him. He sent for

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me next day. 'Your boy Stilović,' he said. 'Absent from Chapel on Sunday.'

'So I hear.'

'It seems he was out on a motor-bicycle and it broke down.'

'I'm not altogether surprised,' I said.

'The boy was extremely frank about it. He knew it was strictly against rules. He says you warned him quite clearly.'

'I did. But I hardly expected he would take much notice.'

'I gather that in his country boys are encouraged to be adventurous provided they don't set a bad example to others or do anyone else any harm. Rather a different ethical outlook. The Spartans would have approved.'

'What did you do with him, headmaster?'

'Actually, I punished him for missing Chapel and let him off with a severe reprimand on the motor-bicycle offence. I told him he was on no account to be seen riding the thing again before the end of the term. We'd better tell his people that he mustn't bring the machine here in future.'

I saw Stilo afterwards and explained to him that some day I had hoped to make him a House Monitor, but that it would be quite impossible if he went on for ever breaking rules. He looked doubtful at this and said he didn't think Serbian boys would like being ordered about by a foreigner. However, he promised not to ride the machine again that term, and I knew he would keep his word.

Many of Stilo's lawless goings-on came to my knowledge only after he had left. For example, in the winter terms he kept a gun at an outlying farm and indulged in rough shooting as occasion offered; and of course he often attended the cinema at Melbury, which was strictly out of bounds. He took no interest whatever in cricket and evaded it when he could; and on half-holidays in the summer he would often get a lift on a lorry into a distant town, see the sights, and return on another lorry or by train. But he never broke rules merely for effect, nor did he lead other boys astray; his view was that if English boys tolerated all these rules they ought to keep them. He did not smoke, because he disliked it, and I was told he never drank anything stronger than beer.

STILO used to spend his holidays in all sorts of ways. Sometimes he joined his people on the Continent, at Paris or Belgrade,

or in Switzerland or the south of France; sometimes he stayed with friends of his father in England; and every now and then one or both of his parents visited England for the holidays and had him staying with them at an expensive hotel.

Whenever they came to England the Stilovići, who were charming and warm-hearted people, used to give Elinor and me a pressing invitation to stay with them, but for various reasons we had never accepted. In Yovan's last summer holidays, when he was nearly nineteen and had only one term at Melbury to go, the Stilovići asked us to join them at the Palace Hotel, Torquay. We had arranged a family holiday and had to refuse again. Besides, we knew that the Stilovići's kind of seaside holiday was not ours; we sought, not superb hotels, but remote places where we could slough off the effects of the summer term in solitary idleness. However, as we were staying further down the Devon coast, we decided to look in at Torquay sometime, and to that end, knowing our Stilovići, added a suitcase of evening-dress to the usual miscellany on the back of the car.

We rang the Stilovići up one morning. They were delighted to hear from us. Would we come over to dinner the following evening? We would be charmed.

We drove up to the Palace Hotel rather bashfully in our ancient car and were welcomed by the Stilovići—Monsieur dark and hard-bitten in appearance, but very courtly in manner; Madame beautiful and vivacious. They introduced us to a Mr Nesbitt, a business friend of Stilović's, and his wife, who were of the party, and told us that the 'young people' (unspecified) were out in the yacht—a motor-yacht which had been brought along, complete with crew, in case the diversions of Torquay should pall. Elinor and I were left with cooling drinks on the verandah overlooking the harbour while the others went to dress for dinner.

The Nesbitts were the first to return and were followed by two girls of about twenty and seventeen. The younger was unmistakably Yovan's sister, Nina; the other, a most attractive girl, was strangely familiar in appearance, though I could not think where I had met her. She was introduced to me as 'Miss Joy Enthoven,' but the name conveyed nothing to me, and I was still racking my brains to place her when she said: 'Mr Barnes and I have met before, I think.'

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I smiled inanely, and Mrs Nesbitt, who had introduced us, said: 'Oh, of course,' with, I thought, some embarrassment. The girl so evidently knew me that I hadn't the face to admit my ignorance. Fortunately, Yovan's sister was then introduced and I had a short reprieve.

The Stilovićs appeared soon after with Yovan and the Nesbitts' son. Yovan greeted me in his usual friendly way, but perhaps with a touch of constraint. When we sat down for further drinks I noticed that he managed to get next to Joy Enthoven. Before we got up to go in to dinner it was perfectly apparent to any interested observer that the two were firmly in love.

As we went in to dinner, Elinor made a chance to whisper to me: 'Who is that girl? I've seen her somewhere.' I signified feeble ignorance.

To my dismay, I found myself sitting with Joy Enthoven on my left. Dire exposure loomed ahead—I couldn't possibly maintain throughout dinner the bluff that I knew who she was. Then a glimpse of her profile brought recognition in a sudden flash—she was the Bursar's secretary at Melbury.

It was not really so remarkable that I had not known her; she had not been very long at Melbury and she looked a very different person in evening-dress from the workaday young woman whom I had spoken to occasionally in the Bursar's office. I had never even bothered to find out her name. To Elinor she was merely a person whom she had seen from time to time about the school premises.

The first part of that meal was invested in a kind of haze. With one half of my mind I was trying to make intelligent conversation to Madame Stilović, while the other half was already labouring under the hideous problems of next term, when I should have a House Monitor who was in love with the Bursar's secretary. I took an early opportunity of glancing at Miss Enthoven's left hand. No engagement ring yet—but perhaps that would come by September. I could almost hear Stilo saying in reply to my floundering expostulations: 'But, sir, how can one be expected to know all these rules? In my country ...'

When the time came for me to turn from Madame to my other neighbour, I said: 'It was quite a surprise to meet you here. How long have you known Yovan?'

'Oh, about six months, I suppose.'

'And'—this with a studied lack of significance—'how long have you been at Melbury?'

'Two terms.'

My faint hope that most of their courtship had not taken place in the cloistral air of Melbury was dashed. I steered rapidly out of that dangerous current. 'I hope you like Melbury.'

'I love it. It's really much more interesting than I expected when I went there.'

I bet it was! I didn't dare ask how she had come to know Yovan. Boys occasionally went to the Bursary on small business concerns, but it was hardly the place to conduct a courtship. Perhaps it was better not to know too much.

I probed into Miss Enthoven's home-life. She lived in Ayrshire and had broken away to independence from what she represented as a rather stringent home. I did not ask if her stringent parents had ever heard of Yovan, though I should have liked to know. She was delighted to meet someone who knew Yovan, even if it was only his housemaster; and she talked much about him. On the whole I got the impression that she was a very nice girl, but I feared she would take a lot of stopping.

After dinner the young people went out and I managed to get Madame Stilović alone in the palm court for a while. She took a romantic rather than a practical view of Yovan's attachment; it was so nice to see young people in love; youth was the time for loving, and one could enjoy youth but once. There was, moreover, something special about a first love-affair—so fresh, so spiritual. I agreed, with moderated ecstasy—and tried to divert Madame's ideas into more practical channels. There were certain difficulties, I hinted; love-affairs did not fit easily into the routine of a public-school.

Madame laughed gaily. 'Ah, your rules! Yovan has told me that there are rules against everything that a normal healthy boy likes to do.'

'As a matter of fact,' I said, 'there is no rule which bears at all on these circumstances. But all the same, a difficult situation has arisen. It is somehow not ... not *convenable*.'

'But of course.' Madame was all understanding. 'I was joking. Love is not for schools. We will tell Yovan that he must not see Joy at all next term. He must stick to his books and his football, no? Then after next term, when he leaves ... we will see. Perhaps

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he will think differently. Perhaps it will be for him then just . . . a great experience.'

So the problem was beautifully solved. As we moved to rejoin the others, Madame said: 'I will speak to my husband, and he also will tell Yovan. You will tell him too. Everything will be quite all right—you will see.' And she patted my arm to dispel the last of my anxieties.

The rest of those holidays was clouded with awful forebodings. I tried to get hold of the Head, but he was in Switzerland till ten days before term started. I explained the situation to him in a letter and he replied that we must discuss it when he returned. The Bursar was in the north of Scotland. When I wrote to him suggesting, not very hopefully, that he should get a new secretary for next term, he wrote back suggesting that I should get a new House Monitor.

THE Head and I discussed the matter distractedly when he got back from Switzerland and came to the conclusion that hopeful inaction was the only possible course. It was not fair at such short notice to ask the Stiloviés to remove Yovan. Besides, they were, as far as I knew, at that moment cruising in the Mediterranean and we could not get hold of them. In any case, they might refuse to take the boy away, and we could only then get rid of him at the risk of highly damaging publicity. Nor could Miss Enthoven possibly be eliminated—or replaced—at a week's notice. We could only trust to the very doubtful discretion of the youthful lovers and prepare for the worst.

I had not seen or communicated with Stilo since that evening in Torquay, and we both approached our first interview at the beginning of the term with uncertainty. Stilo did not know what line I should take, and I was not too sure myself. I didn't believe in putting boys on their honour, and I knew that in such a matter it is useless and unfair to extract promises—when the heart is truly engaged promises will always come off second best. All I could do was to impress upon Stilo how completely the school authorities had put themselves in his hands by allowing him to come back, to promise to invite Joy Enthoven to the house from time to time so that he could see her, and to entreat him not to confide his state of mind to a soul. He assured me he had not already done so.

For his part, Stilo was subdued and pensive. He did not argue or tell me what happened in his country, and he thanked me for promising to let him see Joy. I felt that he was hopelessly torn between a desire to keep the law now that he was a House Monitor and a determination to go on seeing Joy as often as possible.

So we started the term under a cloud of impending crisis. Elinor did noble work by asking the couple to tea now and then, and occasionally taking them out in the car on Sundays and letting them loose for a walk. Stilo was always smuggled into the car outside the school precincts. I never heard of any other meetings than these, and it was plain that my House Captain knew nothing of the liaison. If we talked about Stilo, it was always with reference to his conduct as a House Monitor, which was meritorious, or his rugger, which was brilliant. Gradually a hope began to form that crisis would hold off for the term.

Then one night towards the end of November Stilo was reported absent from dormitory at lights-out. 'Now it's come,' I thought. I told the House Captain to lock up everything, so that Stilo would have to come to my door to get in, and then go to bed.

One is utterly helpless when a boy is reported absent from the House at night, because there is nowhere to start looking for him. One can but hope that he has gone out on some lawful occasion which may keep him late—a society meeting, or private work with a master—and has omitted to get leave in advance. My first impulse was to ring up Dobson, in whose house Joy Enthoven lodged, and ask if she was in; but I refrained—the task of explaining why I wanted to know seemed too difficult. Then I thought of getting Elinor to ring up and ask if she could speak to Joy. She did so, and was told that she had gone to the cinema and was not yet back.

When I went to bed at about midnight and Stilo had still not reported, I could have ordered a taxi to remove him from Melbury next morning without a thought of the possibility that it might not be needed. But fate has a nice taste in anticlimax; and I have noticed before that it takes a peculiar delight in making fools of those whose intuition leads them to condemn others unheard.

Stilo was in breakfast next morning, and I

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sent for him immediately after. I was so cold with anger that I barely noticed he was walking lame. 'You went to the cinema last night,' I said. I was going to have no shilly-shallying.

Stilo looked at me in surprise. 'Sir?' he said.

'You heard me perfectly well. What have you to say?'

'First of all, sir, that I didn't go to the cinema last night.'

This was distinctly unbalancing. I could see he was speaking the truth. 'Well, where were you?'

'In my bed in the dormitory, sir.'

'You were reported absent at lights-out.'

'Yes, sir. I'm afraid I was late. I climbed in by my study window at half-past ten.'

'Where had you been?'

As usual Stilo had broken the law in such a way that you could hardly even blame, let alone punish, him. He had felt he was short of training for a school match at the end of the week and he had gone for a run, intending to get back by bedtime. It was exactly the sort of thing Stilo would do, and there was no question of his lying. Unfortunately he had twisted his ankle jumping a ditch in the dark and had had to walk home, so that he was late.

I was still very cross with Stilo. Why should the wretched boy make such a fool of me—running about in the dark like a lunatic and twisting his ankle, and letting a nice girl like Joy go to the pictures alone?

He completed my discomfiture by asking:

'Can you please tell me, sir, why you said I was at the cinema?'

I could not, and I think he knew why. I could only give a forcible-feeble imitation of anger with him for going out at night without leave. I knew really that I ought to be apologising.

After that, whatever Stilo and Joy had done for the rest of the term I should hardly have dared to speak to him about it. But they both acted with perfect propriety, as far as I know, and the most stressful term I have ever passed drew uneventfully to its close. When it was over, Stilo stayed two more nights with me before the Bursary staff was released and he travelled north to spend Christmas in Ayrshire. How he was received there I never knew.

Then Stilo returned to Belgrade. He wrote to me from time to time telling me of his efforts to become an advocate. He made no mention of Joy Enthoven, who had also left Melbury a term later. Then came the war and a barrier of silence. I heard no more of Stilo till after I had retired from Melbury, when Nina Stilović came to see me. She told me that Yovan was dead. After the German occupation he had joined the Partisans. He went one night to guide some British soldiers who had escaped from Greece. A traitor gave him away and Stilo walked into a German trap and was shot. To his family he had just vanished without trace. They only learned his fate after the war, when the story reached them through one of the British soldiers.

Cinderella à la Freud

*'The kitchen-maid,' read Tommy's mum,
'The Prince's mate has now become;
She's left her two repressed relations
To wallow in their sex frustrations;
No nagging now to cause neurosis,
No cinders threaten her psychosis,
For now the Prince his love has stated
She finds her ego sublimated.
With every complex cured by laughter
They live uninhibited ever after.'*
Said Tommy: 'That's not half as swell
As the lovely tales you used to tell.
Oh, go on, mum,' said the little feller,
'Read me that one about Cinderella!'

MARY GRIFFIN.

The Man Who Killed Christmas

The Maleficent Hezekiah Wood

SAM BATE

FEW people have ever heard of Hezekiah Wood, and yet he is far more deserving of being burned in effigy every year than Guy Fawkes.

Hezekiah Wood was one of the most puritanical of Puritans. He was a man of violent hates, and, above everything else, he hated Christmas. He hated it so much that he spent ten years of his life preaching against it and, eventually, was successful in having it abolished.

It was Hezekiah Wood who stood up in Parliament and made one of the shortest speeches on record: 'What about this Popish festival called Christmas?' Before the session had ended, Hezekiah had persuaded Parliament to denounce Christmas as sacrilege and 'an evil of heretics'.

THE Puritans had already banned all theatrical entertainment, puppet shows, Sunday boating on the Thames, and organ music for whatever purpose in churches, but even they dare not ban Christmas all at once. Instead, they did it piecemeal, and Hezekiah Wood was behind every move. He travelled up and down the country preaching hysterical sermons against Christmas. When he found he was not making much headway with the people, he turned his attention to the local authorities.

At every meeting of Parliament he fanned the embers of their puritanical devoutness. On one occasion he told members that 'this hellish day is no more than a day of drunkenness and wantonness. Its only use is so that the people can worship the Devil so devoutly that they cannot cease from his worship, no more than he or they can cease from sin all the year round.'

Merrymaking and all religious services were banned. Decorations of any kind were abolished. But Hezekiah was not satisfied. He wanted Christmas Day abolished altogether, with severe penalties for anyone caught trying to celebrate it.

On one occasion he said: 'It is the prophane man's idle day, the superstitious man's idol day, the multitude's idle day whereon, because they cannot do nothing, they do worse than nothing'.

He liked that speech so much that he had it printed and circulated to every local authority. Then he read it out in Parliament and the applause was thunderous. A special sitting was arranged to end Christmas for good and all. To show they meant business, they sat on Christmas Day.

'No observance shall be had of the twenty-fifth day of December, commonly called Christmas Day, nor any solemnity used or exercised in churches upon that day in respect thereof.' Another clause of the Act read: 'The market is to be kept open.'

Christmas had been banned. Hezekiah had had his way. Children were born and grew up who had never heard of Father Christmas, who had never known the joy of gifts on Christmas morning, who had never thrilled to the beauty of Christmas bells across the snow.

HEZEKIAH dedicated himself to seeing that the ban was not broken. He controlled an army of spies. He persuaded neighbour to spy on neighbour. Worse than that, he forced children to inform against their parents. Instead of peace on earth, good will toward men, there was fear on earth and hatred toward men.

Mary Boland and John Raynor, of London,

NEW LIFE FACTORIES

were caught kissing under the mistletoe. They were dragged from the house, stripped naked and whipped in the streets. Similar cases were reported by Royalist newspapers from parts of the country. In some cases people found guilty of kissing under the mistletoe were put in the stocks, naked, and left there all night.

Women discovered baking mince-pies or making plum-puddings were unceremoniously hauled off to jail and either imprisoned or heavily fined.

A leader writer for the Royalist newspaper *Mercurius Melancholicus* had to go into hiding from the wrath of Hezekiah Wood, who offered £20 for his capture, for writing: 'Who ever thought it had been a Sinn to serve God before? I pray you let us have an ordinance next weeke against these superstitious Sabbaths!' Here was the amazing paradox of the supposedly irreligious Royalists mourn-

ing the closing of churches on Christmas Day and the devout Puritans upholding the ban.

In another Royalist paper, *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, appeared the following verses:

*All Plums and Prophets-Sonnes defie,
And Spice-broths are too hot;
Treason's in a December pie
And Death within the Pot.*

*Christmas farewell, thy Day I feare
And merry daies are done;
So they may keep Feasts all the Yeare
Our Saviour shall have none.*

Can anyone doubt that Christmas 1660 was the maddest and merriest this country has ever known!

What happened to Hezekiah Wood? No one knows. He must have gone into hiding at the time of the Restoration, for he was never heard of again.

New Life Factories

Remploy's Work for the Disabled

A. J. FORREST

EVERY so often this country relates an urgent labour or social requirement to a new concept in industrial welfare. Of this happy knack an inspired example, which has grown up conspicuously since Hitler's war ended, is the Government-sponsored private undertaking known as Remploy Ltd. Originally, when first created, largely through the wise guidance of Ernest Bevin, then Minister of Labour, it wore the rather forbidding title of 'The Disabled Persons Employment Corporation Ltd.'

The need after the war was paramount for some organisation capable of absorbing disabled men and women whose capacity for work was limited, but not sufficiently limited

to justify their staying idly at home. Nor was such enforced idleness desirable in their personal interests. We all know how with nothing to do even the healthy human being tends to deteriorate. 'Better wear out than rust up' is a satisfying philosophy for millions.

So, with the formation of an administration, of which Air Commodore G. O. Venn, C.B.E., was the executive and, by the way, the driving-force, the new organisation started with a single factory opened at Bridgend, Glamorgan, in April 1946. To-day, Remploy Ltd musters ninety factories spread throughout our island, but sited, of course, in those areas where the incidence of disablement appears heavy. These factories range from Aberdeen in the

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north to Redruth in the south, and from Ystradgynlais in the west to Norwich in the east. Altogether, their total employees number approximately 6100, of whom 43 per cent are ex-service men and women, the remainder being civilian casualties, victims of industrial accidents or road crashes. Women workers form 5 per cent of the strength. Their presence on the factory benches, far from having a disturbing effect psychologically, radiates a quality of homeliness and good-cheer many a lonely disabled man would otherwise lack.

MOST of the factories have their own special lines. Market research forms an integral feature of the organisation. Recently, too, an export market, which it is hoped to develop, has been pioneered. The first orders came from Kuwait and were for wooden and tubular school furniture. Main activities are cardboard-box making, surgical footwear and leather work, brush and broom manufacture, kitchen-cabinet and light-furniture making, protective clothing and textile sewing, a variety of knitwear, printing and bookbinding.

The aim is to find each employee a production job which he can do, after preliminary training, and which neither irks nor frets him, but lies well within his powers, whatever his disablement. Workers are accepted whose effectiveness is as low as 10 per cent of the normal man engaged in the same job. Naturally, then, rates of production are comparatively slow, particularly as the standard of output must remain high, for Rempoy Ltd, without any special privileges, must trade its products in the open market, and it does not, as is sometimes stated, undercut trade rivals. The Treasury, however, meets the deficiency on its annual turnover, a deficiency attributed to retarded production, inevitable in the circumstances, and high sickness rates among employees. Last year excess of expenditure over income amounted to £2,235,000, a slight drop in comparison with the previous year's 'loss.'

To outsiders, this may seem a heavy deficit. But set against the human salvage work so achieved, the new confidence instilled into men and women who, stricken by misfortune, had tended to lose hope, and the skills imparted to those who, in an earlier era, must just have drifted until they died, this

adverse balance is assuredly the very reverse of unsatisfactory. And who calls it a burden on the realm? Reduced to individual terms, it costs us 11½d a head per year, or the price of five cigarettes. Dare anyone, in his proper senses, begrudge that sum?

Between April 1946 and November 1953, Air Commodore Venn told me, 1600 men and women had graduated through the factories to employment in open industry. In the same period it had been necessary to dismiss 200 as unemployable and 110 for disciplinary reasons. In one case, a man threw a hammer at his foreman. Some proved bad hats, being more often drunk than sober. Death claimed 552—the average age of employees, it might be said, is 46—and 452 left for other causes, such as marriage, transfer to a new district, dislike of their particular work—a few, perhaps, did not even like their foreman's face—or they left on their doctor's advice.

PAY is for certain Rempoy employees almost a minor consideration, for there are instances where badly-disabled men, especially those with large families, would receive almost as much for doing no work at all as in Rempoy's service. Take an incapacitated miner, for example, with five or six children. He could draw national assistance and, added to this, special compensation money from the National Coal Board, so, in any case, his family's security would be preserved. But would his own? One man at Bootle actually discovered that it paid him not to work, but work he did, for the companionship it gave him, the physical and mental stimulus, and in the hope of upgrading himself to get back, finally, into open industry.

As a rule, the Rempoy wages-rate, fixed by trade union agreements, is, for the disabled worker, 75 per cent of the rate for the normal adult engaged in the same job. This is, I think, quite generous. At several factories work is intermittent, rather than continuous over the whole year. Orders tend to be small, whereas long runs are most desirable. So there are occasions when factories must wait or mark time for orders. Rempoy does not then, as private firms are forced to do, stand off employees. While functioning as a business enterprise, it aims, above all, to endow each worker with a feeling of security. That feeling means almost everything to a

man rendered by his injury hypersensitive to his personal difficulties, to his relationships with others, and even to his surroundings. Such men see often mountains in molehills and become, if wrongly treated, aggrieved in similar proportions.

REMPLOY wisely makes no impossible claims. It is directed by a board of sagacious men, experienced in man-management. But let me quote an example or two of the good achieved. As a thirteen-year-old, Francis Feeny worked as a pit-boy, earning a few pence a day. Then, suddenly, the roof of his pit caved in. Both his legs were crushed. A double amputee, he did not work again for the next forty-six years. Then, in a mood of understandable anxiety, he joined the production lines at Remploy's factory at St Helens, Lancashire. To-day, an enthusiast for his job, he feels as if twenty years or more have been lopped off him. As a civilian worker, living at Barrow-in-Furness, says in an entirely unsolicited testimony: 'I sometimes take a bus to my work which is also the one that carries about twelve of these disabled persons to their factory. Their cheerfulness is terrific. Some I've known for years, and it seems that new interests and ambitions have been aroused in them.'

Anthony Potter, serving as a gunner on H.M.S. *Black Swan*, was severely wounded in the Yangtze River action. His injuries left him with a fractured spine and completely paralysed in both legs—handicaps few men would care to face. Yet, working in the progress department of Remploy's factory at Yardley, near Birmingham, he has a cheerful word for all comers. His outlook is robust and progressive. In his leisure time he is an enthusiastic archer and, a member of the Harborne Archery Club, has won several competition trophies, shooting from his invalid-chair. After all, the Navy taught him gunnery, so he should be able to draw an arrow on a target. He does it magnificently. And when in June 1952 he married his teenage sweetheart, his archery club members lined up outside Yardley Parish Church and gave the happy couple a royal send-off beneath an archway of bows.

I felt stimulated myself through a visit paid recently to Remploy's factory at Barking, Essex. Here it was easy to sense an atmosphere of contentment and quiet pre-

occupation. Several employees of the ninety or so engaged here on light-furniture production and repair work had experienced the dismay and misery of a weary sequence of dismissals and job-seeking attempts until ultimately they almost feared to offer themselves for any kind of work. Epileptics face a hard world if they battle against it lone-handed. But Remploy acts as their buffer and bulwark. A 29-year-old, well-spoken, red-headed young man at this factory told me in matter-of-fact tones of his many years of heartbreak before he found haven here.

'As soon as I could,' he said, 'I joined the R.A.F., but directly they found out I was an epileptic I was discharged. Later, with the war still on, I wangled my enlistment in the Scots Guards. Again came discovery and my discharge. Then, to keep myself going, I did casual labour on farms in Devonshire, Warwickshire, Cambridge, Norfolk, and other counties. Always it was the same story. Directly my employer knew me to be an epileptic, he dismissed me. I cannot blame him. Once I had a fit while driving a farm tractor. I overshot the headland, ploughed straight through a hedge, and bumped across the adjoining road.'

He picked up work, too, as an odd jobbing-gardener and for four months as an electrician at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge. Then, virtually sick with rebuffs, he joined Remploy Ltd and, as he said frankly, instead of that feeling of having something to hide, he knew that his affliction was recognised and that he would not be sacked. What he most craved, security, was his at last. One happy outcome has been a tendency to suffer less from fits than formerly. Besides, he has time now to indulge in his hobbies, bird-watching in the Thames Estuary and classical music. As I left him, he was contemplating, delightedly, a flying-visit to town to hear an evening recital at St Paul's Cathedral of Handel's *Messiah*.

Employees cannot, of course, be retained if, under the stress of their fits, they threaten violence or do violence to their fellow-workers. But most epileptics know when their fit is coming. Then they can retire to a quiet room and get it over either alone or with medical attendance. Through such care several emerge as new personalities. Shattered egos are virtually mended. Many physically disabled profit no less. And several arrested tuberculosis cases, women in particular, find

that quiet continuous work restores their peace of mind. Their bodily health takes new root and, after a time, they are able to leave this sheltered employment to gain jobs in open industry.

REMPLOY LTD, as Air Commodore Venn explained to me, also runs to-day a homework scheme, in which those subscribing to it are paid on a piecework basis. 'But as far as possible,' he said, 'we aim to ensure they shall get paid about 2s. an hour for their work.' The scheme does not provide diversionary work, except, of course, indirectly. Men and women, homebound cases, are trained in their homes. About 150 are now enrolled in the scheme. Their work embraces the mending of stump socks, knitting of string vests, making certain types of mops, bundling tape, or the fashioning of hat-badges and lanyards. There is, it is true, some difficulty in finding suitable work, but the effort is amply repaid. For such men and women the feeling of usefulness, so engendered, changes the entire atmosphere of their home-life. After a time, too, they may get well enough to enter employment at the local Remploy factory.

EACH Remploy factory has its own well-organised canteen and Workers' Consultative Committee. In fact, a go-ahead committee, made up of the employees themselves, almost guarantees brightness for all! It is invaluable, too, for ventilating grievances, real and imaginary. Usually, factory managers are not disabled persons. For continuity's sake, this is essential. It would

be hard to run a factory efficiently if the manager had frequent sick-leave, or was unable to face up, physically or mentally, to his responsibilities. However, at Coventry, thanks to his own sterling efforts, the manager there has risen as a disabled worker from the factory-floor to his present office—in both senses. All praise to him.

Several factories, too, reveal laudable enterprise in organising social functions. Members may subscribe perhaps 3d. a week. Then they indulge in a summer outing, light-hearted, far-ranging, and luxurious in style. The Southend factory last winter made a point of seeing almost to a man *Humpty Dumpty on Ice* at Wembley, just as the Springburn factory literally stormed into a Glasgow pantomime.

All this is to the good. Remploy, like every other organisation, makes mistakes, but it performs a multitude of good. Both Australia and New Zealand have adopted its ideas on a minor scale to-day. And recently inquiries were received from British Columbia. As a means of furnishing an industrial life-belt for the disabled, such a scheme can hardly, I think, be bettered. Commerce should support it wholeheartedly.

Deprived by accident or war of his full capacity, a man needs every recompense an understanding nation can afford him, and where that recompense restores simultaneously his self-respect and working-pride, it is indeed invaluable. Within ten years of its birth, Remploy Ltd, firmly yet sympathetically conducted, has a fine achievement to show. Its factories make not just articles of sound commercial value—they make broken lives new, and I mean 'new' in no mere metaphorical sense.

Twilight

*In solitude at evening
I watch the sunset die,
And hear the wind among the trees
An echo to my sigh.*

*For I, who loved, am lonely now
And sad when twilight falls,
For no one knocks upon my door,
And no one softly calls.*

*Yet night is gateway to the dawn,
And dawn a bridge to day.
Come, gentle Time, to heal my hurt,
And tend me on my way.*

VIVIAN HENDERSON.



Maiden Lady

HUGH QUINN

OLD Liza Keenan was the rapper-up for the district. Every morning at five o'clock, hail, rain, or blow, the thump, thump of her little hammer could be heard as she went on her rounds, knocking at the door of the sleeping workers to waken them to another day of toil in the mill. In the muffled, dark winter mornings the sounds came depressing and dull, as of someone knocking on a coffin lid.

As Liza passed from door to door, the clatter of her militiaman's boots kept echoing on the cobblestones with rude, but not unpleasing, cadence. Once, wakened by the noise, I looked from my bed through the window and saw old Liza for the first time—a dim hooded figure moving through the vague light of a winter dawn. Her shawl was lapped tightly round her head and face, leaving but one eye visible; her little hammer poised ready for action. As she passed from sight I could hear the knock, knock of the hammer and a staccato cry: 'Waken up there—you're late. That's Campbell's owl mill-horn blowing.' In the distance a mill-horn was blowing, dismal and persistent.

I did not make the acquaintance of Liza till I was a lad of fourteen. The Edwardian decade was drawing to a close. Passing

through a side-street one day on my way to school, a second-year monitor with a pile of books strapped together under my arm, I saw a woman sitting on a window-sill. She was wearing a jacket with leg-of-mutton sleeves, and a white straw-hat fixed to her hair by a long hatpin, protruding and menacing. 'God save us!' she cried, glancing at the pile of books. 'What school do you boord at?'

I recognised the staccato voice of the rapper-up and marvelled at the change of costume. She was dressed in the style of a young woman of the period. 'She is an old maid,' I thought. A married woman, old at forty then, dressed in bonnet and cape. This much I knew of women's attire.

'I'm a monitor,' I explained, a little proudly, perhaps. 'I'm going on for a teacher.'

We drifted to acquaintance. Almost every day, going or coming from school, or rounding up absentees, I met her. Usually she would be sitting on the window-sill, airing her gay attire. In the little talks we had she spoke of the days of her youth, with regret, I thought, though she tried to give the impression they were of recent occurrence. 'This is to put back her age,' I reasoned.

I got to like Liza, and we became friends. She talked of many things, but never once did

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she refer to the business of rapping-up. Her heavy boots discarded, her shawl cast aside, her morning's work done, she was no longer Oul' Liza, the rapper-up, but Miss Elizabeth Keenan, maiden lady, once courted by a sailor boy who struck up to her on the Queen's Bridge, but who went away to sea and 'got drowned.' This one romance of her life she detailed to me in instalments as she sat on the window-sill. But always she spoke of it as a recent event, and not as something which had happened in a dim and distant past.

Liza had some justification, however, in her pretence to be thought young. One day she was hatless, and I saw, to my surprise, that her hair was abundant and brown, though stencilled here and there with wisps of grey. Her eyes, though faded, were gentle and blue, with that vague look of lingering girlhood which old maids never seemed to lose.

ONE day Liza was sitting on the window-sill, her brows puckered, her eyes screwed painfully as she tried to read a paper held at arm's length. It was Saturday afternoon; my studies were finished for the day. On seeing me, she smiled. 'Here, you,' she cried, 'you're a scholar. Come on in and read this for me.' In the kitchen she said: 'I can't find my specs. I only use them for headaches—I'm not old, mind ye.'

I maintained a discreet silence.

'Sit down on that chair,' she said, 'and lift the weight off your legs.' Then she pushed the paper in front of me, indicating the story. It was the last instalment of a serial entitled 'Love, Lost and Won.' I read the story to the end in my best histrionic manner, as I had been taught to recite in school. Liza listened, amazed, and shivered with excitement. It told of the final reconciliation of two lovers, the hero and heroine who had become estranged by the unscrupulous, persistent, but in the end futile, attempts of the villain to keep them apart. There was an illustration of the lovers clasping—in a rather tame fashion, I thought, not at all like the courting couples I had seen standing in gateways. The villain, with a fierce scowl, and tugging at his moustache, was 'fading into the night.'

When I had finished, Liza commented with astonishing volubility. 'Ye rattled that off well—nothing bates the larnin'. And that bad pill of a villain—he got his deservings. He had to slink off into the night. He got off safe,

but. The last one threw himself over a cliff.' Suddenly her abrupt speech ended, her voice grew soft, and she went on. 'The way ye read that brought back the night the sailor boy struck up to me on the Queen's Bridge. Oh, but he was a lovely modest boy for a sailor. He called me "Miss" the whole time and behaved mannerly.'

As she showed me to the door, Liza said suddenly: 'Will ye come round to-night and read the rest of the stories. Ye can read like a play-actor. I'll give ye a threepenny-bit; no, here it is now.'

The offer was tempting. I accepted the retaining-fee, admitting the contract.

IN the kitchen that night I was introduced to Jamie, Liza's brother, who worked in the brickfields. He was sitting at the fire, a misshapen mass of clay, his face a dusty brick-red. With a vague sweep of her arm, Liza indicated his presence. 'There he is—my darling brother, clabber and clay to the eyeballs. It's a slabbery job. He's just recovering from a founder he got in the breechfields.'

Jamie shivered, as if to illustrate. I said to him, 'How do ye do?' through politeness, but he took my request literally, and muttered: 'I'm a done and spent man—aye. But in my young days I had stirring times tramping the Borders of Scotland. Powerful times—'

'Here, boy,' Liza shouted, 'give the Borders of Scotland a rest. We're out for a read.'

Jamie's memories and Liza's did not blend.

I read the remaining stories, all in serial form. They were much of a pattern, with stereotyped characters, the hero, heroine, and villain. In this triangle, so different from the modern triangle of passion and guilt, there was but one delinquent, the villain, who, forgetting his Euclid, discovered in the end that the lovers' two sides of the triangle were together greater than his own—the third.

Week after week I came round and read the stories. Sometimes Liza would hold a post-mortem on a story which intrigued her. After castigating the 'bad pill of a villain,' and the lovers who quarrelled on the slightest pretext (to be continued on our next), she would adroitly revert to her own romance of the beloved sailor boy. And always she would add a little bit to her story—of how, for instance, they would link arms, and walk up one side of North Street and down the other, on a Saturday night, and watch the stir of

people. With these additions, it became a serial story in itself. Unlike the fictional stories, it had, alas, a tragic ending. He went away to sea and 'got drowned.'

Sometimes I would ask Jamie his opinion of the stories. He would mutter: 'A lot of fool nonsense. Too much love for my pleasure. Ah, the stories I heard as a boy—when I was a boy!'

'What were they about?' I would ask.

With a flare of reminiscence in his eye, he would reply: 'About haunted castles, and skeletons clanking in chains, and men with stout hearts sleeping there for a bet.'

Then Liza would say: 'Who's at the fool nonsense now? It's time all dacent folk were in their warm beds.'

I read the stories for a number of weeks, and then I grew tired. I was a growing boy, with new interests to occupy my mind. The great big world was calling. I made the excuse of having to study for a coming examination. The reading stopped. Like the lovers in the serial stories, Liza and I drifted apart.

THE first decade of the century had passed. It was the year of the Census. I was then seventeen, sporting my first suit of longs, with the concomitant bowler-hat and choker collar. Occasionally I met Liza in the street. As we passed, I would raise my bowler-hat, and say out loud, so that the neighbours could hear: 'How do ye do, Miss Keenan?' This delighted her. The word 'Miss' to her mind, I knew, connoted vaguely youth and possible romance; whereas 'Missus' suggested a married woman growing obese, with love and romance a thing of the past.

One day I met Liza looking worried and perplexed. She showed me a pale-yellow form, saying in her odd, brusque manner: 'Here, what the hell's this carry-on? A big peeler shoved it under the door.'

'It's a Census form,' I said. 'You must fill it or be fined.'

'Oh, to see if we're in our senses, eh? Well, there's nobody daft in our—'

I interrupted her, explaining the idea of the Census, and promised to call round that night and help her fill it.

In the kitchen, when I called, Liza was waiting for me, ready with pen and ink. Jamie was sitting in his clayey clothes, gazing into the fire. He looked up at me, critically examining my suit of longs.

'What do ye think of him now?' said Liza to her brother. 'He has sprung up sudden like a leek, eh!'

'Aye,' said Jamie, 'he's coming to manhood's stern estate!'

She started on the business of the evening. I wrote down Jamie's name and asked him his age. A scowl darkened Liza's face, but a smile lit up the features of Jamie. He tuned himself to reminiscent pitch, and began: 'Let me see, now. The year I tramped the Borders of Scotland—stirring times, then—powerful—I was in my prime. That would be in the 'seventies, and would leave me now, say, about—'

'Sixty,' snapped Liza. The guillotine came down with a crash.

Jamie looked seventy to me, but I said nothing.

Then I turned to Liza. She was ready for the fray, proud and defiant. 'Miss Elizabeth Keenan, maiden lady,' she said. I wrote down 'Elizabeth Keenan, single.' About her age. I looked at her with oblique interrogation. 'Fifty, and to hell with them,' she snapped.

THEN came the year of Old Age Pensions.

One day Liza came round to the school. She was greatly changed, but the change, I could see, was not wholly due to the passing years. 'It's about the pension,' she began in a tragic voice. 'I put Jamie's age, and my own, back that time ye filled the Census form. I said Jamie was sixty and I was fifty. It was all lies.'

'Fifty, and to hell with them.' The odd phrase popped up in recollection as a Jack-in-the-box when the spring is released. Next day was Saturday. I promised to call round and discuss matters with Liza. Coming down the street next morning I saw, to my surprise, Mrs McGinty, who lived opposite, standing at Liza's door. Liza did not like married women, dreading their innuendoes about sex.

'Here he's coming,' said Mrs McGinty in her pig's-whisper.

I knew Mrs McGinty well. All her children, now grown up, had attended the school.

'Come on in, sir,' she said, 'and see if you can handle this woman. She's talking of giving herself up to the peelers—all about the Census.'

Liza was standing in the kitchen, with the look of a tragic queen, dressed in her best apparel. She wore a large hat, flamboyant

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and new. The straw-hat was going out of fashion.

'How do ye do, Miss Keenan?' I said, raising the bowler-hat.

At the familiar salute, Liza winced, remembering her past folly. 'I'm going down to the Court,' she explained, 'to own up to the lie. They can't hang me. I won't keep my darling Jamie there out of his pension.'

Jamie, shivering as with ague, was looking round with a bewildered, frightened look. 'The founder's come back on me,' he muttered. He had grown old and feeble since I last saw him, and was wearing his Sunday best—an ominous sign that his working-days were over.

I was about to explain matters to Mrs McGinty, but she laughed. 'As if I didn't know,' she exclaimed. 'They're all turned old of a sudden since the pension came. Fashions change.' She became serious. 'Sit down and we'll talk this over without mutiny. What age are ye, Liza?'

The question, so sudden and startling, unnerved Liza. She muttered evasively: 'It's Jamie I'm thinking of. He's over seventy.'

'Never mind about Jamie; he'll keep. It's your age I want.'

'Sixty-eight,' said Liza faintly. But the Census form would make me—'

'Never mind about that bit of paper. They lit their pipes with it long ago. Have ye any lines to show your age?'

Liza had no lines. They were born somewhere in Tyrone, Jamie and she, and came to the city when they were young children. Their mother never spoke of her past. Now she was dead. The archives of memory had perished.

To my surprise, Mrs McGinty was relieved at this. She remarked: 'I don't like printed forms of any kind. They give ye no chance.' Mrs McGinty had once received a summons for abusive language. 'Here,' she said suddenly to Liza. 'Go into that back room, take off that ballroom costume, and put on your shawl and heavy boots. I'll get you the pension all right, if ye do as I tell ye.' She spoke with such conviction that Liza obeyed. In a few minutes she returned, dressed as the old rapper-up.

Mrs McGinty looked at her with critical, hostile eye. 'Will ye put a crulge in your back, for goodness' sake—you're still straight as a rush. And that brown hair at your age'—Liza winced—'jist look at it.' The criticism went on, remorseless. 'And that face with the

look of a plaster-saint, what am I going to do about it?'

Mrs McGinty then turned to me, and said with the despair of the artist: 'Look, she still has the eyes of a young girl.' Liza's eyes were faded, gentle, and blue. 'I'll jist have to dab your face here and there with soot to age ye a bit.'

Liza did not protest as this artist of the macabre and grotesque put her threat into execution. Liza wanted the pension. We all have our price.

'This face doesn't give me a chance,' grumbled Mrs McGinty, as she went on with her fell work. 'The last one I dolled off for the pension didn't wash her face for a whole week, and let her eyes grow bleary, and the snuff dribble away and dry on her nose. She went down to the Town Hall with a shawl on her stoving with the smell of paraffin-oil, and started to slabber and talk into the man's face about minding the night of the big wind. This was all at my instigation. He gave her the pension to get rid of her, and she wasn't much turned sixty.'

Poor Liza shivered at the details of the ordeal yet to come.

From a large black bottle Mrs McGinty sprinkled the shawl with paraffin-oil, savouring the odour with delight. 'Now for a taste of snuff,' she said, taking a snuffbox from her bosom and dusting the shawl with the pungent powder. 'Nothing like the smell of snuff to annoy them. Snuff and stale porter. But Liza doesn't drink.' Again that despairing look of the artist.

The transformation was now complete. Poor Liza! After so long and valiant a fight in defence of her youth against contending years, to find herself, in so brief a space of time, an old woman, deformed and ugly!

'Don't forget now,' was Mrs McGinty's parting injunction to Liza as she went out, 'to slobber and talk into the man's face about minding the night of the big wind. If there's mention of birth-lines, ye don't know where ye were born, no more than ye know where you'll die. Good luck to ye now, in your venture.'

LIZA got the pension all right. And so did Jamie. At the special invitation of Mrs McGinty, I was present in the kitchen when 'the man from the Town Hall' was to come round and see Jamie, who was too feeble

to go down in person and 'establish his claim.'

Jamie was back again in his working-clothes, a change, I suspect, due to Mrs McGinty, with an eye to theatrical effect. 'Don't forget,' she said to Jamie, 'if he asks ye questions to say ye mind being carried as a chile to see a royal purcussion somewhere. The night of the big wind is played out.'

The official from the Town Hall came—a benevolent-looking old gentleman with side-whiskers, white spats, and pince-nez bridging his nose. He glanced at Jamie with a quizzical, kindly look, shook his head, took out his notebook, jotted down particulars—and Jamie got the pension.

Things were done like that then. It was in the dim, legendary years before the coming of the printed form with its prying, intimate questions; before the age of the Civil Servant with his dossier containing the memoranda and data of our lives.

And now, I am afraid, we must leave the happy pair. Liza used to say in the old reading days it was a pity we couldn't follow the hero and heroine, now their troubles were over, into the delectable land of Happy Endings. But lovers, like countries, when blessed, have no history. Jamie lived but a few weeks to enjoy the pension. At the wake Liza told me, in her brusque manner, of his last moments. "'Here's your pension,'" says I, shoving two half-crowns into his hand. "I think I'll save up," says he, "and have another tramp round the Borders of Scotland." And with that he went off in my hands sitting on the chair there—just like that.'

Liza lived but a couple of years longer. I went round to see the last of my old friend. Mrs McGinty was chasing some children away from Liza's door. By this I knew she had taken over command. She gave me a short, sad nod, terse but eloquent from a woman so loquacious. A few neighbours, lugubrious and silent, were sitting in the kitchen. On a table in the corner was spread out the old journal whose stories had so delighted Liza, and, on top, her spectacles and the wee hammer. A thin, frail woman was standing beside the table, toying idly with the handle, but not daring to lift the hammer. 'That's the new rapper-up,' whispered Mrs McGinty.

'Liza is dead,' I thought. 'Another old woman has stepped in to take her place, and the senseless duplication of life goes on.'

In the back room Liza was lying in her coffin. She was dressed in a brown robe with a hood which half-concealed her forehead. Her features were gentle and placid, with that settled look of death which comes on when all traces of thought and suffering have fled. And round her lips there still lurked a faint remembrance of her vanished youth. A wisp of brown hair, streaked with silver lines, was peeping from beneath the hood. Mrs McGinty, at my side, was staring intently at the face of Liza. Without raising her eyes, she said in tones of awe: 'I declare to God, she's growing younger-looking every minute.' Then she looked up at me and said: 'Oh, but Liza would be the proud woman this day if she could see herself lying there in the coffin like that!'

Mozambique

*Oh, Magic has me by the heart
And I must go and seek
With Neddy and his bamboo cart
The gold of Mozambique!*

*Your spirit's strong, my Lion One,
But hunger makes men weak.
You'll want your tuck-box and your gun
To take to Mozambique.*

*No, Mother, nothing shall I need
Save food to keep Ned sleek;
For on my Magic I shall feed
From here to Mozambique.*

DOREEN KING.

The Town that Lives on Brandy

CURTISS HAMILTON

IT is claimed that of all the drinks in the world cognac is the most cosmopolitan in the sense that it is drunk in the greatest number of countries. Looking at the names stencilled on the new wooden cases awaiting dispatch from a factory in the town of Cognac was like reading a gazetteer of the world's great ports—from Cape Town to Haiphong and Hong Kong, from Zanzibar to New York and Vancouver. In the adjoining label-store I saw labels printed in more than fifty different languages, including Chinese and Siamese, but all spelling the same word—cognac. Man, taking advantage of the chance that in a small area of France particular kinds of grapes acquire unique characteristics, produces a liquid which seems to have a universal appeal. As Scotland alone can produce real whisky, Jerez real sherry, Portugal real port, and Champagne real champagne, so a small area about the size of Hampshire, a little north of Bordeaux, watered by the Charente and enclosed by the hills of Périgord and Limousin, produces the brandy named after the town in its centre.

The fermented juice of grapes is distilled in other parts of the world to produce brandy, just as drinks called whisky are made outside Scotland, but all the cognac drunk in the world comes from the vines on rather less than 140,000 acres of this carefully-defined region. The production of it is a fascinating combination of art and science, with art perhaps still playing the bigger part. The scientists have been unable to find a substitute for the human nose and palate as a guide to tasting brandy, just as geologists who have made exhaustive analyses of the soil of the Charente have been unable to find any other place with the same characteristics.

No one can explain just why a light grey, chalky soil strewn with stones, probably good for little else, should produce grapes that make

a poor wine but a unique brandy. They will tell you in Cognac that it is not only the soil but also the sun, and especially the light, which is of astonishing brilliance, but without the fierce glare of the districts further south. Mostly, however, they are not worried by the reason why, but just content with the gift of Nature that has brought prosperity for centuries to this corner of France, comparatively little known to the tourist. It is sufficient that the juice of their grapes which makes a poor wine should with nothing but the passage of time in oak casks and the skill of the taster become an amber-coloured liquid prized all over the world.

THERE is a story that the people of the Charente took to distilling their wine because of its poor quality and thus almost accidentally invented the brandy that has made them famous. More probably distillation, perhaps learned from the Arabs who distilled their perfumes, began because the *eau de vie* or spirit was more easily preserved and shipped than the living wine. There appears to be no record of the exact origin of the trade, but brandy was being exported to England in the 17th century, and at the beginning of the 18th some 27,000 casks a year were being shipped from the Charente ports. To-day, the area produces about 55,000,000 gallons of wine.

In essence the methods of distillation and maturing have changed very little through the centuries. The stills used to-day are of the same curious shape as those used two centuries ago. The barrels are still of oak from the Limousin forest near by, and the manufacturers have been able to find no substitute, although they have tried other French, American, and Russian oaks. The secret is said to be that the Limousin oak is

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porous and that the tannin, which gives brandy its characteristic colour, is soft and delicate.

The 140,000 acres of vines are owned by no less than 64,000 growers. The areas whose grapes can produce cognac are rigorously limited by French law. Seven growths are recognised, in order of quality: Grande Champagne, Petite Champagne, Borderies, Fins Bois, Bons Bois, Bois Ordinaires, and Bois Communs. The growths border each other and very different values may be attached to two fields separated by no more than a road or ditch. Apart from these official growths, the experts recognise many others and the quality that may be expected from each patch of land is known to them. The variety is enormous and it is only the skill of the taster that makes possible the production year after year of cognacs of standard strength, taste, aroma, and appearance.

The cultivation of the vines is much the same as elsewhere. The Charente, like other parts of France, was devastated by phylloxera in the 19th century and to-day the French grape is grafted on to a wild American vine root. The grapes, golden-green and unattractive eating, are harvested in September and October, the huge casks of fruit still being carried to the press by horse or oxen carts. The juice pressed out is fermented, the process usually taking about fifteen days and continuing until all the sugar has been turned into alcohol. Then follows the distilling, the first of many critical operations. The still is the ancient alembic of the Middle Ages. The first product is a liquid called *brouillis*, about one-third of the original volume, colourless and opaque and with an alcoholic strength of about 28 per cent, three times that of the original wine.

A second distillation, locally called *la bonne chauffe*, is carried out with immense care. There must be a slow, steady fire, with no interruption. The men who carry out the work sleep on the job. In the corner of the distillation-room I saw little curtained cubicles with bunks and alarm-clocks, although I understand that a new French law will demand separate dormitories for these devotees, who for weeks at a time cut themselves off from all outside amusement. The distillers have immense skill, learned by experience, and much depends on their devotion. For this reason, although many farmers distil their own wine, it is often spoiled by the necessity

of leaving the still to feed the chickens or perform some other task, and the big cognac manufacturers have their own stills.

THE first liquid to come off—with an 80 per cent alcoholic content—is rejected. Then comes the *eau de vie*, with an alcoholic content of 58-78 per cent, cognac in everything but age. It is frequently sniffed and tasted to judge the exact moment to stop the flow. The cognac is carried off. The first liquid and that which comes over afterwards is added to a further *brouillis* for redistillation.

Cognac at this stage is full of youthful fire, what the French call the 'ardent soul' of wine, powerful but not a pleasant drink. All through the winter it is produced in the Charente. The fires never go out night or day, the temperatures being constantly watched. Although as it trickles from the still the cognac is nothing like the liquid we know, it is at this stage that it is made or marred. A badly-distilled brandy will never improve with age. It must have a smooth, velvety taste.

There follows the storage in oak casks. In this there is no substitute for the passage of time. The process and the practice of it remain something of a mystery, something which the masters practise with rarely erring skill based on long experience of both cognac and casks, but which cannot be standardised or explained. As the cognac ages, there is a fantastic loss through evaporation. It is estimated that the equivalent of 10,000,000 bottles of cognac evaporates into the air every year—about the same amount as all France drinks! The alcoholic content is reduced to about 42 per cent and as the years pass there is the transformation of the colourless, fiery liquid into a smooth, amber one with a powerful bouquet.

How many years the cognac remains in its cask depends upon many factors. There is a popular notion that the older the brandy, the better it must be, and one hears stories of fabulous 'Napoleonic brandies'. Unlike wine, brandy once it is removed from the cask and bottled ceases to age. The real age of a brandy is the number of years it spends in the cask. A brandy made in 1800 and bottled in 1850 would be no older than a brandy made in 1900 and bottled in 1950. The really old brandies are stored in demi-johns, where the taster may draw on them in

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small amounts to produce just the desired quality in a blend of more recent ones. Vintage brandies—that is to say, unblended brandies from the grapes of a single vineyard, are to-day rarities. They vary enormously in quality and nowadays the demand is for a good brandy every year, something it is possible to ensure only by blending.

THE art and skill of the taster is uncanny and difficult to analyse. He has an exceptional 'memory' for aroma and taste. His palate can recall a hundred subtleties of them, as the musician can carry in his mind a score or 'hear' endless harmonies. Basically it is a gift. Some men have it, and the vast majority do not. It is one that shows itself quite early. I heard of a boy of 15 who already showed great talent. But the gift, of course, flowers only after years of experience. The liquid is placed in a small tulip glass—the balloon glass of the English after-dinner brandy is never used—which can be easily warmed with the hand. The cognac is twirled in the glass to release the bouquet, sniffed with the nose right in the glass, and then tasted—just a drop on the tongue. It is never swallowed. A master taster in a few moments of tasting knows all the history of the cognac, its virtues and its faults. He will tell you if the grapes from which it was made were nipped by spring frost and he will tell also what other cognacs will marry with it to correct its faults and give it positive qualities. He will do this, sometimes, eighty times between an early breakfast and lunch and, far from the palate becoming cloyed, the master tasters say they are at their best after they have tasted some fifty times.

It is a fascinating and uncanny business and the master taster well-deserves the cognac which, when evening comes, he actually drinks for pleasure! Almost entirely on the skill and knowledge of the few men with this gift depends the ability to produce a blended brandy year in year out which has nothing added and nothing taken away. In a single bottle of cognac there may be brandy from a dozen different years and a dozen different vineyards, yet it will be exactly the same as every other bottle bearing the same label. Tests have shown that only one case in 3000 shows any variation.

The mixing of the different cognacs is carried out entirely by gravity: the liquid is

never pumped, as this might destroy some of its virtue. The great casks—some warehouses contain as many as 30,000—are emptied at the top of the building and the liquid is directed down sloping channels and pipes. In the process perhaps 60 barrels, each of 72 gallons, of varying growths and ages from 5 to 45 years, are married into a harmonious mixture. After blending there follows a further period of ageing in casks, the length of time depending on many factors, and finally comes the passage through filters and silver pipes to the bottling-machines.

THE cognac that goes to all parts of the world is the same for each mark, but the way it is drunk varies greatly in different countries. In West Africa it is mixed with ginger-ale, topped with ice, and called a horse's neck. In Venezuela the finest cognac is drunk neat, but as an *apéritif* before a meal. In the United States it is the basis of many cocktails. In Britain it is drunk with soda and also, and more often, as an after-dinner liqueur, although if a census were taken it would probably be found that perhaps six households out of ten have brandy in the house for medicinal purposes.

All this may help to explain why cognac can never be cheap. To-day we blame the excise-tax, which, of course, represents a much larger part of the cost of a bottle than the liquid inside. But exactly a century ago when Charles Dickens visited Cognac and saw much the same as I have seen, he wrote: 'Good brandy is not cheap, even at Cognac. My landlady strongly urged me to carry off a bottle from her stores, at the cost of seven francs . . .' Seven francs was then about 7s. Dickens did not take his bottle of cognac—he was not a drinker of spirits. To-day the customs would insist on duty being paid on a bottle, although a half-bottle might be allowed through. The customs and Cognac have long pulled in opposite directions.

In the archives of a big producer I found a letter dated 16th February 1735 from a West Derby merchant addressed to Madam Martell & Co, quaintly beginning: 'Madam and Sirs', and saying that 'this day a report prevails here that a further duty will be laid on Brandy on the 25th March next . . .' They urged the shipment of a large amount of cognac. Beating the budget is at least 200 years old!

Shaw's Other Dustman

DESMOND M. FISHER

ONE of Bernard Shaw's dustmen, Alfred Doolittle of *Pygmalion*, travelled out from the brain of Shaw and went right round the world. But his other dustman—Mr Patrick O'Reilly of Dublin—never got farther than a visit to Shaw himself at Ayot St Lawrence in Hertfordshire.

Patrick O'Reilly is a real-life dustman who has emptied dustbins in Shaw's native city for forty years. He answers very well to the description of Alfred Doolittle, who was 'an elderly but vigorous dustman . . . well-marked and rather interesting features . . . has a remarkably expressive voice, the result of a habit of giving vent to his feelings without reserve.'

The real dustman, who was Shaw's friend in the author's last years, is now conducting a one-man campaign to make Dublin give the author a more honoured and permanent memorial than the small marble plaque erected on Number 33, Synge Street, where Shaw was born in 1856. It was Dustman O'Reilly who collected the funds to erect this plaque, gathering pennies and sixpences from the people whose bins he emptied every week.

The dustman, who treasures the 26 letters and 5 postcards Shaw wrote him, is proud of an association with Shaw and wants Dublin to be the same. So he is asking Dublin Corporation and the authorities of Trinity College, Dublin, to co-operate in putting a statue of Shaw in the forecourt of the College, where statues of Edmund Burke and Oliver Goldsmith look down on the swirling traffic of College Green.

Some fifteen years ago an eminent Polish sculptor presented a life-size statue of Shaw to the National Gallery of Ireland. 'They just put it away in a back room,' says the dustman. 'Why can't they bring it out and put it somewhere the people of Dublin can see it? It should be up on top of Nelson

Pillar right in the centre of the city or in front of Trinity College.'

Shaw himself approved the suggestion of the statue at Trinity College. He wrote to his dustman friend: 'If they want to put me with Burke and Goldsmith, the pious and the immortals, who have been there for so many years, they can get a copy of my statue out of the National Gallery for about £200.'

Dustman O'Reilly means to keep pestering the civic authorities and the Trinity College heads until they erect a suitable memorial to Shaw. 'It's a terrible thing,' he says, 'that Bernard Shaw is held in honour all over the world but the people of his native city won't raise a finger to do honour to his memory.'

DUSTMAN O'REILLY has done his bit to honour his friend. His connection with Shaw started more than forty years ago when he saw Shaw's *Man and Superman* in the old Rotunda Theatre. He began to read Shaw's works and every day since has taken down the tattered volume of plays and reads from it in the tiny and scrupulously-clean municipal cottage where he lives alone with his memories of Shaw.

Just round the corner is Synge Street, where, as has been said, Shaw was born, and where the plaque erected by the dustman tells the fact to the world. It was in 1944 that O'Reilly first had the idea of erecting the plaque. In that year the Dublin City Council presented Shaw with the freedom of the city, and sent representatives to Ayot St Lawrence with the Roll of Freeman for Shaw's signature. Two years later Shaw celebrated his 90th birthday—on 26th July 1946. And to his home in a quiet corner of Hertfordshire came presents, costly and rare, from all over the world. The postman also brought him a small present from Ireland. It was a little gold shamrock.

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The gift was from the Dublin dustman. It took him many weeks of searching to find it. The windows of the city jewellers' shops were full of beautiful gifts—but the price tags put them out of consideration. And then the dustman found the gift he sought—in a pawnshop. Tucked away in the corner of a dusty window was an article as old and as rare as Shaw himself—a golden shamrock. It cost only 12/6, and to pay for it the dustman saved 2/6 a week for five weeks out of his weekly pay-packet of £4.

Back from Ayot St Lawrence came a card. 'A golden shamrock!' Shaw wrote. 'What a charming gift! It is on my watch-chain, and it will remain there until I myself drop off it.'

In 1947 Dustman O'Reilly returned to his idea of erecting a plaque on Number 33, Synge Street, the undistinguished terrace-house in which Shaw first saw the light. He collected for months, going round hat in hand to the householders whose bins he emptied every week. Many of them were humble working men like himself, but from their pennies and sixpences he built up the fund and commissioned the plaque.

He wrote to Shaw about the plan and said he wanted the inscription on the plaque to read: 'He gave his service to his country unlimited, unstinted, and without price.'

Shaw's reply was typical. He wrote: 'Dear Pat, Your inscription is a blazing lie. I left Dublin before I was 20 and I have devoted the remainder of my life to Labour and International Socialism and for all you know I may be hanged yet.'

Shaw then sent over a drawing showing the design he wanted for the plaque—a wreath of shamrocks in marble with the inscription:

BERNARD SHAW
author of many plays
born in this house
26th July 1856

The plaque as designed by Shaw was erected on the house.

LATER that year Dustman O'Reilly had a cherished wish come true when he travelled to Hertfordshire and met Shaw in his own home. His greeting to Shaw's secretary, Miss Blanche Patch, was: 'Tell Bernard Shaw the dustman has come to bring him home on his back.'

He was ushered into the garden where Shaw greeted him effusively. 'Hello, Pat,' he said. 'Come on in. I'm a bit thin but my muscles are good.'

Then the two Dublin men talked about the city where they had both grown up and about the streets they had played in as children.

'And do you remember the Pottle at all?' asked the dustman. The Pottle is a narrow alleyway near which Swift lived as Dean of Dublin's Christ Church Cathedral.

'Yes, indeed, I remember it well,' Shaw replied. 'I often played marbles from Synge Street, up the Pottle into the Coombe, and back by the 'Barn' past my father's mill at Rutland House. I remember, too, robbing an orchard at the back of Portobello Bridge on the way home.'

When the dustman asked if he wanted anything from the people of Ireland, Shaw answered: 'I have everything that money can buy, and all I want from my Irish friends is their prayers, which are unpurchasable.'

And back at home, when the dustman heard that his friend Shaw was in hospital with a fractured thigh, he walked up to the Shaw family grave in Mount Jerome and took flowers from the grave to send to the author. But he never heard if Shaw received them.

AND now the man who worked as a dustman for forty years before retiring early in 1953, is thinking up new means to get Shaw's native city to do justice to his memory.

'Dublin owes Bernard Shaw more than money can pay,' he says in a brogue which Professor Higgins of *Pygmalion* would immediately recognise as Dublin's best. 'There's a lot of short people who would make little of Bernard Shaw, but if they were to stand on their tippy-toes on the highest mountain, they would not be fit to lick his boots. Now they're shorter than ever before. There's no man in any political group or in any other group who could challenge my friend Bernard Shaw's *bona fides*. Any man who would go to the Home Office in London and say 'Put me down as an Irishman' is no renegade. He spoke for the martyrs of 1916 when the people who should have spoken for them could not be found. He was a gentleman and a scholar and Dublin's very famous son.'

A widower since 1936, Dustman O'Reilly lives by himself. His two sons, Sean, aged 21, an electrician, and Charlie, 20, a plumber,

SHAW'S OTHER DUSTMAN

live with an aunt. Every week the dustman's mail includes letters from people in America, Australia, India, Britain, and other countries, who want to know more about Shaw the man, and who turn for information to the Dublin dustman who liked Shaw the man better than Shaw the great genius of literature.

And one recent letter that came to the little

cottage at 17A Richmond Place asked for details of the £94,000 trust fund which Shaw's wife left for cultural and educational development in Ireland. The writer wanted to know if the fund would provide £5000 for the foundation of a jazz band.

'What Bernard Shaw would say to that, I'd like to know,' says Shaw's other dustman.

The Coming of the Christmas Beer

*The cobblestones are lost beneath the snow,
Fallen early this year, giving the lie
To forecast and to old wives' wisdom alike,
And, far and near, its fleece enchants the eye,
Save where black ruts are cut, as mammoth wheels,
Chained to a safer pace, lurch down the hill,
And with a rattle and a squeal of brakes
The lorry halts outside the inn to thrill
Me with a picture, ageless, warm and bright,
Framed by the dark trees. Bathed in orange light
From the old inn, the men descend and throw
Open the trap-doors, shifting weight of snow,
Revealing the red face of the jovial host,
Upright and smiling, like some jolly ghost
Of Christmas past. The Christmas beer has come—
Round-bellied barrels, bottles to take home;
Scent of the hopfields 'neath a summer sky
Rivalling the scent of pine from the treetops high;
Thick ropes tossed across the snow
As the casks are lowered
To the cellars, deep and dark and secret,
Each cask showered
With snow-spray from the cellar doors.
And as I turn away I wonder if the shades of those
Who drove the brewer's dray,
With its strong, gargantuan horses,
On a far-off winter's day,
Are watching from the shadows, and chuckling to see
The Leyland with its age-old load, and the ancient alchemy
Of the smell that comes from the cellar's depths
Attracting, magnet-wise, two muffled granfers,
A man with a dog, and a schoolboy with goggling eyes.
And when the inn is lost to sight
I still can see the picture bright—
The great casks bathed in orange light,
And the ghosts of the draymen, chill and white
As the moon that scuds through the winter night,
When the massed clouds break and the snow showers cease,
And bright threads gleam in the soft white fleece.
It cheers me all the journey home.
Once more the Christmas beer has come,
As in the days long past it came.*

AILEEN E. PASSMORE.



A Dog's Life

CECIL F. S. HILL

'NO new visiting-cards here, I suppose.'

The Black Spaniel paused for a few moments at the privet hedge, lowered an aristocratic nose inquiringly, and after a few contemptuous sniffs hastened to rejoin his waiting companion.

The two dogs trotted off down the street side by side.

'Just as I expected,' the Black Spaniel grumbled with a growl of disgust. 'The same old common mixture as always. Really, it's most offensive to a chap with a cultivated and delicate taste like mine.'

The Brown Spaniel with the engraved collar put out a pink tongue and smiled, raising his eyes to the other with an expression of limpid sympathy.

'Do you realise, my dear fellow, that with the exception of yourself there's hardly anyone I care about knowing in the whole street?' continued the Black Spaniel, and he trotted along in silence for a few yards, allowing the significance of his statement to take full effect.

Beyond offering another pink-tongued smile in appreciation of the compliment, the other dog made no reply.

'Even that new chap in No. 10 is quite impossible. Some kind of terrier, I believe. But, if you ask me, there's several kinds in

his make-up.' Here the Black Spaniel indulged in a series of throaty chuckles.

His companion paid lip-service to this pearl of canine humour with a few panting licks and a flourish of his tail.

'He simply cannot allow a motor-bike to pass without wanting to chase after the stinking thing. What his object is I can't imagine. He never manages to catch it. And speaking of chasing,' the Black Spaniel went on, 'have you noticed that queer little whippet thing with the horribly squeaky voice who lives in that shed at No. 15? Well, my dear fellow, to see that stupid creature chasing around after his own tail—*his own tail mind you*—why, it's positively ridiculous. It makes a fellow feel dizzy to watch him. Something ought to be done about it. I've heard it's some kind of disease—something to do with worms, they say. And I shouldn't wonder, either, when that nasty little boy who owns him keeps cats and rabbits and pet mice and I don't know what else about the place. It's really disgusting.'

The dogs turned the corner, carefully avoiding the deceptively-playful invitations of a large Airedale behind a garden-gate, and made their way across a large area of waste ground in the direction of the town.

'Of course, there's a professional side to chasing, too,' continued the Black Spaniel, disdainfully ignoring the derisive calls of the frustrated Airedale. 'I was speaking only the other day to one of those greyhound chaps. Quite a well-bred fellow—Irish, I should say, by extraction, and most entertaining to talk to. He seemed terribly thin, poor chap, although it seems that this is quite natural to them and really an asset in their profession. It appears they have to chase a hare around a track, the idea being to get as near to the thing as they can without catching it. The humans who go in for this sort of game are evidently more feeble-minded than most of their kind, because they actually bet money on the result. Could you imagine anything more stupid?

'Of course, the hare isn't a real one. My friend told me that he thought it was at first, when he was young and just starting, but he soon became disillusioned. As a matter of fact, he *did* happen to catch the hare one day, when the contraption broke down. He took one bite at it and was almost sick. Why, the thing was nothing more than a bundle of sawdust and fluff and something that tasted like cardboard.

'But he seemed quite satisfied with his job. They feed him well and give him a nice warm, dry bed. And of course plenty of exercise. Personally, though, I didn't like the look of the human who was in charge of him. Crafty, furtive-looking type, I thought. Not at all the sort of person I'd care to have leading me about. But I suppose such a form of entertainment must attract some very peculiar characters.'

The Black Spaniel paused for breath. Much as he liked talking, it was exhausting work keeping up a one-sided conversation, and he would have liked to have heard a few responses from his companion, who hadn't spoken a word yet. He began to wonder if the fellow really was as intelligent as he had thought.

DID I ever tell you that I was once connected with entertainment?' resumed the Black Spaniel. Such a direct question could not fail to draw an answer, he decided, and he waited with lolling tongue for the result.

The Brown Spaniel smiled, considered carefully for a moment, and then nodded an agreement. 'Yes—yes, you most certainly did,' he replied in a breathless falsetto. He

wasn't getting any younger, and this unaccustomed exercise was beginning to tell on him. If it hadn't been for the Black Spaniel's promise of a good lunch, he doubted whether he would have come at all. 'Something to do with the stage, I think you said?' he added, hoping that he wouldn't have to do any more talking for a while. It really was such an effort.

A satisfied smirk spread over the Black Spaniel's face. It was something to know that one's words were remembered. He moistened his lips with his long tongue in readiness for the startling news he was about to disclose. 'You're quite right,' he said, 'and at some of the largest theatres in the country.' He waved his black plume of a tail importantly. 'I started when I was quite young,' he went on. 'When I was not much more than a puppy, in fact. The man who owned me was a ventriloquist, you see. That is someone who can throw his voice and make it appear to come from someone else.

'Well, he travelled about the country, playing at different theatres each week, and he took me with him. He used to take a dummy on the stage with him, and he'd sit the dummy on his knee and talk to it, and the dummy was supposed to answer him. Of course, the thing was really only a bundle of rags and wires—I found that out one day when I wanted something to bite at—but it wasn't a bad act. At any rate, it made people laugh, and my boss got paid for it.

'But it wasn't long before I realised that my owner was contemplating a change. He used to sit for hours regarding me with speculating eyes. I soon tumbled to what he was thinking about. It was evident that he intended to use me in place of the dummy in his act.' The Black Spaniel paused, and cast a sidelong glance at his companion. He was pleased to see that his words were having the desired effect, for the Brown Spaniel was gazing at him with wide-eyed, open-mouthed respect.

He settled into his stride again and cleared his throat with a couple of authoritative coughs. 'I suppose it was only to be expected,' he continued, 'especially when you realise that I had more than ordinary intelligence for an animal of my age and breed. And a real live and intelligent dog was much better than a stuffed and useless dummy.

'Naturally, I was an immediate success. The audiences grew bigger with each town we visited. Our bookings were assured months

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in advance, and our "notices"—I think that's what they are called in the profession—were excellent. My picture appeared on all the posters and I was simply pestered by newspaper photographers and reporters. But I didn't really mind—I always took a good photograph, you know.

'Everything was fine for a while. I was well looked after. Nothing but the best would do for me, and I don't mind telling you in all modesty that I was enjoying the whole business. What is more, I was learning a thing or two. But I'll tell you about that later.'

The dogs were nearing the town now, and both animals stopped to refresh themselves at a convenient pool. When they had satisfied their thirsts, the Black Spaniel shook himself thoroughly and regarded his companion with a look of concern. 'I hope this is not proving too much for you,' he said anxiously. 'You look positively done up, old fellow.'

The Brown Spaniel smiled, but it was rather a grim effort. The truth was he did feel tired and a little snappy. But he was hungry, too, and he wasn't going to give up now just when the promised lunch was almost in sight. 'I'm quite all right,' he replied stiffly.

'Well, we haven't got much further to go, anyway,' said the Black Spaniel as they moved off again. 'I'll just have time to finish my story before we get there.'

'Let's see, where was I? Oh, yes, I was saying that I learned a thing or two from this ventriloquist fellow, wasn't I? Well, although these humans have a pretty high opinion of themselves, there's nothing really elevating about their language, not the way most of them speak it, anyway. Why, I've known parrots to make fools of them when it comes to speaking their own language.'

The Brown Spaniel halted. He raised his long ears and put his head on one side, and stared at the dog beside him with open-mouthed admiration. 'Do you mean to say you actually learned to speak the humans' language?' he asked breathlessly.

'Confidentially—yes.'

The Black Spaniel turned, and for a few moments his body shook in a spasm of uncontrollable mirth. He threw himself on his back and rolled over and over on the short grass with low growls of ecstasy. Then, looking annoyed with himself for such a display of emotion, he shrugged himself into an attitude of dignified aloofness. 'We'd better hurry,' he said, starting off at a loping

trot, 'or we'll find the shop closed when we get there. I've never been as late as this before.'

'If you are wondering how I came to sever my connections with the stage, I might as well tell you that success went to my partner's head. He was always too fond of the bottle, and he eventually drank himself to death. Whisky, of course—filthy stuff.'

'The landlady where we were staying had her eye on me, but I couldn't stand her or her cats. And so I just ambled off on my own—I could look after myself. And so that, you may say, was that.'

THE dogs turned into the main street of the town and, the Black Spaniel leading the way, crossed the road and entered a small back alley. Here the Black Spaniel stopped. 'The place we're going to,' he confided in a low voice, 'is just around the corner in the next street. Now all you have to do is just keep quiet and leave everything to me. Don't make a fuss, just watch me and wait.'

The Brown Spaniel nodded and sniffed the air eagerly. 'There's certainly a meaty smell about,' he said appreciatively.

They moved off down the alley, turned the corner at the bottom, and emerged on to a narrow street. Directly opposite was a butcher's shop, in the window of which various cuts of meat were temptingly displayed. A man wearing a blue striped apron was busily chopping and sawing at a table in the centre of the shop. 'Doesn't that look good to you?' said the Black Spaniel.

The two dogs, their noses quivering in anticipation, sat down side by side on the pavement and fixed their eyes unwaveringly on the window.

'He'll see us in a minute,' whispered the Black Spaniel.

As if the man heard the words, he at once looked up and moved to the doorway. He stood staring at the dogs for a while, scratched his head, and called to someone at the back of the shop. 'That black spaniel's here again, Joe.'

Another man wearing a white coat and apron came forward and stood beside him. 'Brought a pal with him this time, eh. Well, he's unlucky to-day. Chase 'em, Bill, or we'll have all the dogs in town here.'

Joe disappeared into the shadowy interior of the shop, and Bill, after a rather half-

hearted attempt to scare off the dogs, returned to his work at the table.

The Black Spaniel moved a little nearer the doorway, rolled his tongue round his dripping jaws and swallowed hard.

'Throw 'em that lump of steak on the slab, Bill!'

Bill dropped his chopper and stared in bewilderment towards the back of the shop.

'But, Joe, you said—'

'Throw 'em that steak, I said!'

Bill continued to stare as if he could not believe his ears.

'Throw 'em that steak, d'ye hear me?'

Moving like someone in a trance, the man walked across the shop to the window slab.

'Prime steak,' he muttered, 'for dogs! He must be mad.' He shrugged his shoulders, picked up the meat, and with a heave sent it sailing through the shop doorway to the street.

IN a lane at a safe distance from the shop the dogs shared a very tasty lunch. When they had finished, the Black Spaniel turned to his companion. 'Just between ourselves,' he said, smacking his lips over the remnants of the meal, 'there's another shop I know where we can try to-morrow.' The Black Spaniel gave a deep sigh of regret. 'It's a pity,' he added, 'but I'm afraid that ventriloquist act wouldn't work again at the same place.'

An Australian Ghost

J. WEBSTER

IT was in the early days of Australia that a strange story came to light in a law-court. Those who believed in ghosts were convinced that they now had proof, the doubtful began to believe, and the sceptics became thoughtful.

At that time New South Wales was a British colony and Sydney was still a convict settlement. Prisoners serving life sentences fared very badly. They complained of ill-treatment and insufficient food. They were given the heavy tasks of splitting and trimming the hard stone for public works and building the difficult roads over the mountains. Not infrequently they died and were buried alongside the roads they were making. Prisoners serving a few years' sentence could, on their discharge, apply for a grant of land and were encouraged to take up farming.

Two such convicts, Worrell and Fisher, were, on being discharged, each given a grant of land near Campbelltown, a farming area about 30 miles WSW of Sydney. It was good land, on the fringe of the rich country then

known as Cowpastures, later to become famous as Camden, where the first of the merino sheep-farms was started. The land was still virgin scrub and much hard work was necessary before crops could be produced. Trees and scrub had to be cleared and the property enclosed by a post-and-rail fence. Worrell built himself a primitive but strong log-hut. Fisher's hut was of the wattle-and-daub variety, much used at that time as a temporary shelter.

The free settlers and ex-convicts did not mix socially and, with no other company, a friendship grew up between the two men, though they really had not a great deal in common. Used to hard work, they soon had two successful farms, selling their produce each week to an agent in the near-by town. Although it was a hard life, with no amenities, Worrell was quite satisfied to settle down in the new country. Fisher, however, was not so contented. He had never liked the hot dry climate or the hard, bright sunshine. He

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hated and feared the snakes and lizards and creeping things he sometimes found on the farm. In summer the mosquitoes made his nights unbearable, and the day's work in the dry dusty soil made him long for the soft skies and cool greyness of his homeland. This was his first attempt at farming, and, though he made a living out of it, he really didn't care much for it. He had lost touch with his relatives and longed to hear from them, but, being very conscious of his disgrace, was diffident about writing to them. He wanted very much to go back to England, but was doubtful about the reception he would receive from his family.

He often talked to Worrell about going home, and even discussed with the agent the possibility of selling the farm and the price he could expect to get for it. The agent was not so very surprised, therefore, when one day Worrell arrived with the produce of both farms. He told the agent that he and Fisher had taken a trip to Sydney a few days before. Looking for company and news of home, they had found themselves at a small hotel near the wharf at Circular Quay, which was frequented by seafaring men. They had got into conversation with some sailors and learned that a fast ship was due to leave on the morning's tide. Fisher had decided then and there to take passage on her. Worrell had promised to manage both farms and sell the produce. The agent was co-operative and Worrell worked very hard at carrying on his double job.

In due course he received a letter from Fisher with an English postmark. The letter was written in a happy vein and told how his family had welcomed him home and killed the fatted calf. All was forgiven and he had decided not to return to Australia but to settle down again in England. He asked his friend to arrange about the sale of the farm and send him the money. Worrell took this letter along to the agent, who recognised Fisher's signature and had half-expected the letter anyway, and the farm was duly put up for sale.

It was about this time that an Irishman known as Old Barney had caused a diversion in the small town. He, also, had a small farm a few miles out of town and lived there alone. Periodically he was in the habit of spending the day and most of the evening on

a drinking session, then, starting off late at night, he trusted to the old horse to take him safely home. On this occasion he had started off as usual, full of beer and his native superstition, only to return half-an-hour later in a state of great agitation. He told his story excitedly and emphatically. There was a ghost, he said. It was sitting on the bridge that spanned the creek just beyond the town. The old horse had shied at the apparition and refused to pass it, and Barney declared he had been shocked sober. He demanded more beer to drown the memory and nothing would induce him to leave town that night. Everybody laughed. Old Barney was well known as a soak, and a ghost was a change from snakes and pink elephants.

Then other people, sober and more reliable than Old Barney, reported having seen the ghost on the bridge. One man, greatly daring, had taken a longer look at the ghost and was shocked to discover that it bore a strange resemblance to Fisher the ex-convict, whom he had known by sight. Most of the people to whom he mentioned this scoffed at the idea of the ghost looking like Fisher. It was well known that he had gone back to England. Everyone knew that the agent had seen the letter with the English postmark and Fisher's signature. Even if Fisher had died in England since writing that letter, why should his ghost haunt a bridge in Australia? It was common knowledge that he had never cared for the place, and neither he nor his ghost was likely to return to it.

But the credulous grew thoughtful. What really was behind all this story of Fisher's ghost? Ugly rumours began to get about, and, like all rumours, they sometimes passed into the fantastic. The townspeople became afraid to go near that end of the town at night and the timid locked and barred their houses. The ghost was fast becoming a public nuisance!

FOR some time the police took no notice. They had, of course, heard all the rumours and were, on the whole, inclined to discount them. Their job required them to be very practical men and they were not unaccustomed to hearing odd stories, which usually turned out to be flights of fancy. The whole ghost story had been started by old Barney after a drinking session and they knew Barney well enough to take no notice of his horror stories.

AN AUSTRALIAN GHOST

No doubt it was just an instance of a silly rumour magnified to extraordinary proportions. However, this affair was threatening to affect seriously the people and the social life of the township, so the police decided to investigate the matter.

They wanted to disprove the ghost story beyond a shadow of doubt. Accordingly the police force, supported by some reliable townsmen as witnesses, made their way to the bridge one night—and the ghost was there! There could be no mistake. It was the ghost of Fisher, the ex-convict! As the astonished men watched, it glided to the end of the bridge and then back to the water's edge underneath the bridge, and disappeared.

Next morning the police, though still sceptical, decided to drag the creek and forestall any fresh rumours. To their surprise, they found the body of a man which had obviously been there for some time. Identification was not easy; but it was certainly the body of a white man, and the description fitted the man Fisher.

The prison authorities were called in and were able to identify the body as that of the ex-convict. Fisher's relatives in England, when communicated with, declared that Fisher had never arrived there. They also said they had not heard from him since he had been deported.

The letter received by Worrell was submitted to experts and proved a forgery.

Circumstantial evidence was piling up against Worrell. He protested his innocence, but was arrested and charged with the murder of Fisher.

THE trial caused great excitement in Sydney. Murders were rare in the sparsely-populated new country and the strange circumstances of the finding of the body had aroused much interest. Although the police concerned were willing to state they had seen the ghost, the much-discussed story would not be accepted by the judge. Supernatural evidence could not be accepted in a British court of law.

The evidence against Worrell was great and he was convicted of the murder and sentenced to be hanged. The sentence was duly carried out and before he died he confessed to the murder of Fisher. He told how, finding Fisher sitting on the bridge one hot night, he had hit him with a stout stick he was carrying, knocking him back into the water. He had written the letter and given it to a returning convict, paying him to post it in England. He had thought his scheme was fool-proof. He also said that Fisher's ghost had haunted him every night until it had led the police to the body.

It was almost the perfect murder, and it is doubtful if the crime would ever have been discovered had it not been for the ghost.

Sing a Song of Sixpence?

*Sing a song of sixpence?
Sixpences are small;
Songs to suit a sixpence
Aren't heard at all.*

*Sing a song of shillings?
Well, perhaps I may
Pipe a little measure,
Tune a little lay.*

*Sing a song of guineas?
Ah, that's better still—
Guineas make a poet
Trill, and trill, and trill.
Sing a song of guineas?
Yes, indeed I will.*

ELIZABETH FLEMING.

Twice-Told Tales

XLVIII.—Passengers Last

[From *Chambers's Journal* of December 1854]

THE number of large steam-vessels lost during the year now drawing to a close has exceeded that of any former year. Of all these losses, the newspapers of the day have said perhaps enough, and it is painful to recur to the subject. We think, however, it may be of use to express what is the general feeling respecting these disasters: it is, that, with one exception, they were all apparently the result of carelessness on the part of the commanders.

Besides the negligence of captains, another deplorable feature has been brought to light by these shipwrecks. We allude to the cowardice and selfishness of the crews. Regardless of all sense of duty and humanity, and seeing that their commander has either deserted them or become useless, they think only of saving their own precious lives, and going off with as much plunder as they can conveniently carry. In several instances, the firemen have set the example of insubordination and relentless cruelty. In the case of the *Arctic*, cowardice in the firemen was particularly conspicuous; but their conduct, on the whole, was not worse than that of a fireman belonging to the *Forerunner*. A witness mentions that this fireman took possession of a boat to save himself and his clothes. These clothes were in several bags, and occupied the space which should have been given to some of the passengers. When the witness got into the boat, and began heaving the bags overboard, in order to make room for persons from the wreck, the fireman was indignant at the loss of his miserable luggage, and was only quieted by a threat of being pitched after it.

The coarse brutality of the firemen of the *Arctic* and *Forerunner* is capped by the villainy of a band of wretches on board the *Yankee Blade*. This large vessel, with 800 passengers on board, shortly after leaving San Francisco, having in the usual manner been run too close in-shore during a fog, and

pitched on a rock, the captain shoves off in one of the first boats, to look, it is said, for a landing-place. A number of the passengers get ashore in other boats; but many are drowned in the attempt to save themselves, and for a large body of the passengers there are no boats at all. Huddled together, and deluged by the surf, hundreds sit despairingly all night on deck, expecting every moment that the quivering hulk would go to pieces. At this crisis, and from the time the ship struck, a horrible scene was enacting in a part of the vessel which had been taken possession of by a crowd of desperadoes. 'No sooner had the ship struck,' says an eye-witness, 'than a band of men, armed to the teeth, consisting of notorious shoulder-strikers and ruffians from San Francisco, and a portion of the firemen of the ship, rushed below, and commenced pillaging the baggage. They burst into the state-rooms, ripped open carpet-bags and trunks, plundered them of all the money and valuables they found, and cast the rest aside or overboard. They displayed knives and revolvers, and threatened the lives of all who attempted to interfere with them, or who even made an effort to get at their own baggage. After the rise of the water drove them out of the cabin, they betook themselves to the upper steerage and commenced a course of wild riot. They got hold of the liquors—many of them drank themselves furiously drunk—ransacked the luggage—obtained a large amount of gold—attacked, beat, cut, and shot all who were in their way—and became, indeed, a band of infuriated fiends. They stationed a guard at the gang-way, to prevent the better portion of the passengers from coming down. Some of these attempted to force their way in, when they were cut with knives and bottles, and even their persons robbed of their watches and other valuables.'



The Medusa

E. M. JONES

THE figurehead, representing a fine-looking woman with serpents in place of locks of hair—the Medusa herself, stood in old Lemuel's garden surrounded by tall waving grasses and tufts of lavender. Lemuel often sighed over the grass and the lavender spikes, for it was his housekeeper, Mrs Harding, who had insisted that the figure should be thus hidden away, instead of occupying a prominent position in the front-garden as the old man would have liked.

'The shameless brazen hussy,' Mrs Harding used to mutter whenever the Medusa came under discussion. And always when she went to gather sage or mint, or to cut a fine lettuce, as she often did in the course of the day, she could not forbear casting a baleful, withering glance in its direction. The Medusa, indeed!

Lemuel had told me when I was quite a small lad how he came by the figure. Twenty years ago, or perhaps more, it had come to his ears that an old sailing-vessel in which he had voyaged in his youth was being broken up by a firm of shipbreakers. In the wink of an eye he had taken a train to Scotland, transacted his business, and a week later had the Medusa brought back by lorry and set up in his garden. And there it remained, to be his pride and joy as he passed backwards and

forwards along the garden-paths, stopping occasionally to survey the snaky tresses, or even to caress the curved neck with his gnarled old seaman's hand.

'Yes, she's a fine lass in spite of all they say against her,' he said one day. 'But you should have seen her riding the storms around the Horn, dipping and nosing her way through the waves. It was too bad for us lads to be on deck, and we were battened down safe. But nothing was too bad for the Medusa.' He cut off a piece of lavender that was tickling the full rounded chin of his lady, and then whisked round suddenly, for we could hear the approaching footsteps of Mrs Harding, the elderly housekeeper.

But she was not deceived. 'Brazen hussy!' I heard her hiss through tightly-compressed lips, as she walked towards a bed of mint.

'That was hardly a fair comment,' I decided, for the Medusa was not made of brass, but of the finest seasoned teak.

WHEN a storm arose, sweeping inland from the sea, roaring and blustering down the chimney, Lemuel could not hide his elation. 'She'll be feeling good to-night, the Medusa,' he used to say, jerking his thumb

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towards the closely-shuttered window. 'It'll be like old times for her to feel the rain stinging her cheeks, and the gale whistling round her ears.'

Then he would start telling me yarns of his youth—the fine roistering days when he and his two friends, Leo and Jim, sailed before the mast, and of all the wild foolish things they did together, and the laughter, the danger, and the tears.

One night I asked Lemuel to show me a photograph of himself and his friends. He went out of the room and came back with a framed photograph, polishing it vigorously with his cuff. I looked at it, and the disappointment I felt must have shown clearly in my face and voice. 'But they're old—old,' I said almost accusingly.

'Aye, lad, that's what age does to a man in time—never mind how fine and well-set-up he may be,' said Lemuel after a moment's reflection, and he took the photograph of three staid bewhiskered men and put it back in its place on the piano in the front-parlour, coming back again and sitting down in his corner with a deep sigh.

The next evening he brought me another photograph, which he said he had found at the bottom of one of his old sea-chests amongst piles of old curios and treasures from foreign parts. It showed three fine young sailors, three sturdy rollicking fellows with the gleam of youth in their eyes and a devil-may-care look about them that won my heart at once. Leo, Jim, and Lemuel himself! I could make out the features of my old friend, and I saw his eyes light up with joy as I hung over the picture, recalling tales and incidents which he had told me during our long fireside watches.

He laid the photograph aside with care when I had done looking at it. 'If there's a hereafter and we meet again, as I believe we will,' he said, staring into the fire, 'I sometime bother myself if it will be as we were in those days—young and strong and bursting with good spirits, or old and a bit slow of pace as we grow to be.'

I had never considered such a problem before, but I gave the answer that I knew would please the old man best. 'You'll be young,' I said, 'just as you were in Rio.'

I thought of Jim and Leo. 'Are they dead?' I asked suddenly.

He nodded. 'Over ten years ago—within a few months of each other.' And we grew quiet and thoughtful in the firelight.

A FEW days later—it was getting towards the end of my stay with the old man—a storm swept up from the sea. It promised to be a bad night, with a thin pale moonlight filtering through the clouds at rare intervals. Lemuel opened the front-door for a moment and gazed into the garden before he prepared to shoot the bolts for the night. 'A fine night for the Medusa,' I heard him mutter, as I climbed up the stairs to bed.

In my bedroom Mrs Harding had carefully closed the shutters, but I opened them cautiously, letting in the noise of the gale, and the faint light of the moon. When I peered out into the garden I could make out the profile of the figurehead, her proudly-chiselled face, and the snaky locks, which in my imagination seemed to move to and fro in the mad wind like the soft curls of a young girl. I wondered if she had looked so when she had ridden the great storms about the Horn. Brave Medusa! For there was not a wave that she had not breasted in those enormous expanses of storm-tossed sea.

When the clouds obscured the moon, I crept to bed, but so wild was the beat of the rain about the roof and chimney that it was some time before I dropped off to sleep.

Something strange and unaccountable woke me again. The wind had dropped a little, the rain had ceased, and, although the moonlight was pale and feeble, the clouds seemed to have been swept away from the south-west, and the stars rode there peaceably like small craft on a stretch of clear sea. I went tiptoe to the window, wondering how the Medusa had fared in those wild hours which had held me sleeping. Of course, she was still there! But some of the lavender had been torn away by the wind, and her fine shoulders showed clearly in the moonlight, and I could see the damp smooth gleam of her neck.

Strange to say, the Medusa was not alone! There were three shadows grouped about her, and I saw that they were three men, who were talking and laughing together, at a time when no respectable man had business to be abroad.

The wind sobbed and wailed about the house in fitful gusts, and the men's laughter was mingled with the sound; gay, youthful laughter, I thought it to be, coming straight from their gay hearts.

I recalled that a great timber-ship had anchored in the harbour three miles away, and I decided that the three men were members of the crew, walking back from some tavern to

their ship, and whose attention had been caught by the glimpse of a ship's fine figure-head, hidden away in a roadside garden. Sailors, as I knew them, were curious simple-hearted fellows, and the Medusa standing so proudly in the moonlight must have aroused their interest.

I pressed my face to the window, watching the three figures, and noting how the tallest threw back his head in laughter, and for one moment before the moon rode into a thick cloud I thought I saw the gleam of his strong white teeth . . . The darkness swallowed up the three men and I went back to bed.

WHEN I awoke in the morning the storm had died away. The sky was a pure pale-blue, and the raindrops lay heavy over the garden, and, with a few torn leaves and bushes, was all there was to show that a gale had made the night terrible.

Mrs Harding met me at the foot of the stairs. 'I want you to pack a few of your things and go to spend the day at my brother's,' she said deliberately. Her brother lived a few miles away in a neat white farm.

My face must have shown my puzzlement.

'Why?' I asked. 'Is there anything amiss?'

She spoke softly, for she knew my attachment for old Lemuel.

'He died during the gale,' she said. 'When I went to knock on his door this morning I could get no answer. The poor old man's gone.' A tear winked in the corner of her eyes, for in spite of her hatred for the figure-head she was a tender-hearted woman.

We did not speak for a moment, and then I thought suddenly of that strange meeting about the Medusa, in the moonlight, and of the three strong figures who had laughed there together. 'They were young! They were young!' I burst out suddenly. 'It was just as he wanted. They were fine and strong as they used to be.'

'What do you mean, my poor lad?' she said, with her hand on my shoulder.

For one brief second the story of what I had seen from my bedroom window trembled on my lips, and I came near to telling her. But some strange caution seemed to lay a seal on my eager lips like a cool white finger and I could find nothing to say. For would she have believed, or even understood, what I said about that reunion—she who had always hated the Medusa?

The Sun and the Frogs

(After La Fontaine)

*A tyrant married, and his subjects drowned
Their cares in wine and senseless jollity.
Old Æsop was the only one who found
No sense at all in such frivolity.*

*The Sun, said he, did once propose
To take a wife. The news soon spreading,
All the marsh-dwellers in a body rose
Denouncing such a wedding.
'What shall we do,' they said to Fate,
'Should they beget? The Sun's own suction
Is hard enough to tolerate;
A family would mean destruction.
They'd drink the sea. In such a fix,
The fish would die. The reeds in drouth
Would wither. Nothing but the Styx
Would then be left to fill the mouth.'*

*I think the Frogs, though somewhat rudely,
Summed up the position shrewdly.*

WILFRID THORLEY.

The Engaging South African Native

H. H. CAMPION

HISTORIANS paint a vivid picture of the past of the South African native, showing us a warlike, savage creature living under the despotic rule of such bloodthirsty native chiefs as Chaka, the black Napoleon, said to have slaughtered a million people, and Dingaan, his half-brother and murderer. But this is but one aspect. The character of the South African native has many sides, and there is in him the simplicity of the child.

To a great capacity for life and a warm sense of humour the South African native adds a strong love of travel. Should the journey be long, the natives arrive on the platform hours before the train is due, complete with gaily-coloured blankets, gaudy-coloured boxes, and musical instruments, such as guitars—made cheaply for the native trade—a few concertinas, jew's-harps, and mouth-organs. Equipped with these and loaded with other impedimenta, they settle down to wait for the train. Other trains are given a cheer on arrival and departure. Small groups give impromptu dances, others strum monotonously on their guitars, while the rest either blow their mouth-organs or sit stolidly smoking their long pipes.

This scene is usually made up of mine boys returning to their homes in Portuguese East after completing their eighteen months' contract, and most of them dress especially for the occasion. 'Going away' clothes are always something special. A variety of colours are in evidence, and usually their baas is interviewed before departure, and asked to admire the *tout ensemble*. Trousers are hitched up to show off red, green, or purple socks. Earnest promises are made that they will return, smart salutes are given, and exits made with a flourish of the latest in hats.

At last the long-awaited train arrives. It is

besieged. A black mass of humanity stirs to life. Cheers and laughter fill the air. Boxes, tins, and packages are thrown hither and thither. More yells and shouts, and hundreds of black smiling faces lean out of the windows. The train moves out. Still more yells, catcalls, and cheers. The journey has begun.

The short journey, on the other hand, is a different affair, and the native is seldom on time. It is the case of there being 'plenty train.' The travellers stroll across the veld, talking and laughing, and then the train is sighted in the station. The race is on! Some are successful, others are not. Those who make the grade point derisive fingers at those left behind, who usually collapse with mirth at their own failure.

APART from his family, perhaps the most treasured possession of a native is his bicycle. He rides it fearlessly, and what he lacks in road sense he makes up for in deft control and speed. The narrower the escape, the greater the joke. Stop streets may be observed if they are on the top of a hill, but should they be at the bottom of a steepish grade, the chances are that the cyclist will shoot out of them at full speed. On turning a corner, the rider develops an alarming list, thrusts out a hand as an after-thought, and accelerates. A motor-cycle is seventh heaven, and is ridden with great dash and verve. I saw six army native motor-cyclists on bikes and sidecars turning a corner and not one of the sidecars executed the bend with the wheels on the ground.

Next to the joy of riding, there comes the delight of improving the machine. Every bicycle must have a dynamo; should it have two, so much the better; three is better still.

THE ENGAGING SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVE

Some native bicycles are veritable power-plants on wheels, with as many as four dynamos, headlamp, parking lamp, and two or more red rear-lamps. Driving between Randfontein and Krugersdorp, I once encountered a single glaring light approaching. I dipped the lights of my car, and the oncoming light also dipped. It was a native cyclist. There are other accessories also dear to the native heart, such as a rear view-mirror—one or more, according to taste—and number-plates carefully printed with the machine's licence-number. A flag may be flown from the luggage-carrier, and the bicycle-bell is used on every possible occasion.

To a native the top of his head constitutes luggage space. This habit is so well known that it is taken for granted, but what is not realised is the amount of dexterity with which this method of carrying is performed. One may see a native woman walking calmly through the crowded streets of Johannesburg with a sewing-machine on her head. She is relaxed and at ease, and may be talking happily to a companion. In country districts it is a common sight to see a native woman, complete with baby strapped to her back, carrying a four-gallon paraffin-tin full of water, weighing about forty pounds. Seldom is assistance given in the hoisting of such a load into position.

There appears to be no end to the variety of articles which may be so carried—bundles of wood, four or five feet long and a foot or more in diameter, baskets of milk-bottles, bundles of sugar-cane, again in long bundles, calabashes, and so forth. I have seen a native riding a bicycle with a divan bed balanced on his head, and on another occasion a native was transporting a pile of papers in the same manner. On top of the pile of papers he wore his hat!

MONEY is used to buy cows, cows are exchanged for wives. 'Plenty cows, plenty wives'—that is success. In his tribal state the native sleeps on the floor on a handwoven grass mat, and so a mattress to a raw boy is something of a novelty. The first reaction is to slit it open with a knife and use it for hiding money—temptation for the thief!

Compound managers persuade boys to open a Post Office Savings account, but they frequently encounter opposition. It is often

a reluctant native that goes to the Post Office to open an account, starting, shall we say, with two pounds. The transaction over, he walks away clutching a new Post Office Savings bankbook, into which he peers at odd intervals. He gazes at his fingerprint which he has imprinted in the book, he looks at his name written in capitals, he looks at his mine number—an additional means of identification. He shakes his head. He does not like the ways of the white man with money. He has given the baas two whole pounds, and all he has in return is a small book. The whole affair is wrong—he distrusts it. And so on the following day he returns to the Post Office and announces that he wants his two pounds. The postal official makes out a slip, checks identification, and so on, and hands over the two pounds. Carefully the native counts the money, and, having made sure that the baas has not spent any of it, solemnly hands it back.

On the gold mines of the Transvaal first-aid is practised by both Europeans and natives. Classes are held for both black and white employees, and a first-aid certificate is a condition of service for all Europeans. To stimulate the natives' interest in first-aid, competitions are organised. These are between the various sections of the mines and also between different mining companies. The natives are keen. Floating trophies are presented by mine managers to the winning teams and the events are filmed. There are silver cups for runners-up, and consolation prizes, but perhaps the greatest prize is the handshake given by the mine manager to the captain of the winning team.

At times this zest for first-aid interferes with the natives' normal duties. One of my boys used to study first-aid while pushing his broom. Another joined the Army and paid me a farewell visit. He was very proud of his uniform, and informed me that he might be sent to America to teach the Americans first-aid!

Football is popular with the native and the wild energy expended by both spectators and players is enormous. Not to be forgotten are the tribal dances, which the mines encourage. They are awe-inspiring but happy affairs, and must not be confused with the war dance, which is forbidden, due to the fanatical ferocity which is worked up to the accompaniment of war-paint, drums, and witch doctors' imprecations.

IT is a common habit to address an unknown native as 'John.' The strange thing is that the natives do not appreciate the fact that John is a noble name. It is wise to ask the new boy his name, rather than to slip into the habit of calling him John. Should you adopt the latter method, however, the chances are that after a few days you will be approached by a rather embarrassed native and informed with all seriousness that his name is not John, but Porridge, Sixpence, August, or Elijah. Months of the year and biblical names, especially those of the Prophets, are very popular.

When a baby is born, the native mother often gives the child her name, and forthwith changes her own. On remote South African farms it is not unusual for the farmer's wife to assist in the childbirth of one of her native servants, and then, to her embarrassment, to find that the new-born has been named after her. The royal visit of 1947 gave rise to many Georges, Elizabeths, and Margarets. One farm native became greatly intrigued with names of textiles, with the result that three jet-black piccanins were named Georgette, Taffeta, and Calico; they were clothed in name only.

The native, so far as clothes are concerned, is a creature of extremes. In the reserves, the traditional loincloth and blanket are popular, but in town the white man is copied, often with incongruous results. An overcoat is something to be proud of, and consequently is worn on every possible occasion, winter and summer. Dark glasses also are worn for conceit rather than protection; they are not discarded until long after sunset. Heavy boots are a joy to the native, and it is a sad day when they wear out. Should a journey be made over rough ground, the boots are often removed and carried round the neck, joined by the laces. They have their own ideas of preserving clothes, and a great love of patches of the brightest colours in the most conspicuous places. Felt hats are often preserved with a coat of aluminium paint.

The blanket is worthy of mention here. Several well-known textile-manufacturers cater for natives, who have created a market which has to be studied with care. The native is particular as to the design and colour of the blankets, and fashions change. During the Royal visit already referred to designs embodying crowns were popular, and the war gave an impetus to patterns evolved around

aeroplanes, guns, and tanks. The blanket is worn wrapped about the body, fastened by one giant safety-pin. Even modern art has affected the trend of blanket design; soft, blended colours, popular a few years ago, are being replaced to-day with harder, more definite designs. The increase in the price of wool has inflicted a hardship upon the native. Blanket cost of living has risen, but whatever happens, the choosing of a blanket is for the native an important occasion.

The native has his own ideas of economy, and when buying at his employer's expense he will not hesitate to order the best of everything in the way of supplies as he considers that his baas has 'plenty money.' Farm-labourers are given an issue of mealie meal, which is the natives' staple diet. This is usually given to them in a tin, filled up to the top, and what cannot be eaten is disdainfully thrown away. One farmer, seeing this apparent waste, once decided to fill the tin only three-quarters full, and the outcome of his idea was immediate discontent. A deputation of native farm-workers informed him that they wanted their tins filled to the top, otherwise there was none left over for them to throw away! In contrast to this, when the native has to supply his own food he often economises to such an extent in order to save money that he is threatened with malnutrition.

At times, however, the native displays an ingenuity which is both admirable and amusing. Discarded jam-tins are fitted with riveted handles and used for mugs. Old tyres, too, are sought after and fashioned into shoes which, although not the most fashionable in footwear, cannot be said to lack originality. Perhaps the most ingenious line of native handiwork, and also the oldest, is the making of calabashes for the carrying of water, milk, and native beer. A wild African melon or gourd with thick skin is used. A small hole is cut in the tapering end of the melon, and through this the interior is painstakingly scraped out. This calls for both skill and an immense amount of patience.

The native has a childlike, direct approach to life. He likes to buy one thing at a time, and pays for each individual item as it is placed before him. He does not care for lists or time-saving schemes involving methodical ways of work, and once trained into a schedule of duties resists any change in the daily round. His problem is that he is standing midway between two ways of living.



An Affair with a Ghost

SEAN BARRETT

THE trouble with Gerry Whittaker was that he was football-mad. You notice I use the past tense? I was madly in love with him for six months, and he with me. Up to last week, as a matter of fact, I was in love with his memory. But last week two things—an accidental encounter and a news item on the radio—snuffed out the last flicker of my morbid infatuation for a ghost. The saddest thing about it all was that he dug his own grave.

Did I say he was handsome? He was, really! A sort of halfway house between Jack Doyle and Tyrone Power. You see what I mean? I was crazy about him. He was good company, too, and other men respected him, as they always respect athletic prowess. Not that Gerry was a Cuchulainn or Bob Matthias. Far from it. But he had once played in a rugby final trial, and that, I gathered, is the summit of a rugby-player's ambition, except, of course, the 'freaks' who finally make the international grade. 'Freaks' was Gerry's own word for them. He often said that extremes of all kinds are 'freaks,' even extremely good football-players. But I sometimes think that his views may have been coloured by just the teeniest bit of jealousy. He liked all games and played

most, but rugby was his first love. I was his second. My one big mistake was to think I could supplant football in an athlete's heart.

ONE Friday night on the way home from the pictures, Gerry said: 'I have two tickets for the international match to-morrow, Joan. Would you like to come?'

The question was superfluous. If Gerry had asked me in those days to go to a jumping-frog competition, I would gladly have gone.

The following day we met in town and took a bus to Lansdowne Road. Thousands of people, mainly men, but with a fair sprinkling of women, had the same ambition that day, and we were lucky to have tickets. Some failed to get in, but ten minutes after we passed the turnstile I wished that we had failed too. There was a frightful crush.

'It's all these blasted women who know nothing about the game,' said Gerry, a bit illogically, I thought, seeing that he had brought me. It was a little cruel, too, but he probably didn't mean it personally. He continued: 'They come here in droves for an international match, and they wouldn't be seen dead here for the rest of the year. It's a sort of fashion-parade.'

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This shaft also found an unintentional target. I had put on my best nylons, and already I felt two separate and distinct ladders in one leg. What a girl will do for love!

I made my first *faux pas* very early on, when the teams came out. 'Which is England?' I asked Gerry.

He looked at me suspiciously, but when he saw I wasn't pulling his leg he explained patiently, but in an undertone, that Ireland were playing *France* to-day.

When I looked more closely, there was indeed a distinct Frenchy look about one of the teams. They were very tanned, black-haired, and a bit showy-looking. Something about them struck me as a little ridiculous, too, but I couldn't put my finger on it at first. When I saw what it was, I began to giggle helplessly. These bronzed, brawny he-men from *la belle France*, weighing about 15 stone each, were wearing the dinkiest briefest little panties it has ever been my pleasure to see outside of Madame Nicolette's. All they needed was the lace trimmings. Gerry was puzzled by my giggles, but I daren't tell him.

The game started before he could satisfy his curiosity—at least it started for some of the players. For quite some time yet about half of them stood around looking cold and making no effort to take part. These I afterwards learned were the backs, who are expected to do most of the actual scoring, but for the moment the whole affair seemed pretty aimless to me, and I concentrated on discovering the best-looking man in the French side. It was quite a task.

The backs entered the game with startling suddenness. One of them, by some accident, found himself with the ball in his hands and started to run. Next moment about six of the biggest Frenchmen attacked him simultaneously, in what seemed to me a totally unnecessary and very cowardly manner. One of them caught him by the neck, a second by the knees, and another hit him with his shoulder in the stomach. Even from where I stood I could see his look of pained surprise. They all fell with him underneath. I shouted: 'He's killed!' A few men near by turned to glare at me, and Gerry nudged me and muttered something in an embarrassed undertone. And then the referee blew his whistle. 'It's a penalty!' I cried excitedly. 'And no wonder! The brutes might have killed him.'

'Shut up!' growled Gerry. 'You're making a fool of yourself!'

He had never spoken to me like that before, and I looked at him indignantly. But he was right. The poor Irishman got no free kick. It was awarded the other way.

By half-time Gerry and I were on speaking terms again, and he explained to me in a confidential and paternal tone the reason for the referee's peculiar decision. Apparently the Irishman lay on the ball when he should have got off it, though for the life of me I couldn't see how he could possibly have got off it, with half-a-dozen of France's heftiest sons on top of him. This time, though, I kept my thoughts to myself.

A few other things about that game have puzzled me to this day. For instance, why a 'try' should count three points, unless the attempt was successful. 'Better to have tried and failed, than not to have tried at all,' I suppose. And near the end I witnessed some of the most brutal incidents of my life. Men clawed at each other, pulled, pushed, shoved, and danced on their opponents like sadistic children on an unexpected half-day from school. The score at this stage, as far as I could gather, was six points apiece, and the spectators near us, with Gerry as ringleader, behaved like drunken Eskimos. The crowd began to sway so much that I became genuinely nervous, but at last it was all over. Gerry was in high good-humour—Ireland had got a last-minute score—but the general opinion seemed to be that it was 'a scrappy affair with no real punch in it,' which seemed to me a contradiction in terms.

NOTHING would ever have persuaded me to go to another rugby match, but Gerry was a soccer fan too, and played hockey in his spare time. I went to Dalymount Park with him a few times and found soccer a little more entertaining, though less exciting. So things went along fairly uneventfully for a couple of months.

I saw more and more of Gerry. At one time he used to meet me every night, but I rarely saw him on Saturday afternoons, and when he did turn up on Saturday nights his head or hands were generally adorned with little strips of sticking-plaster. One Sunday night we had booked for the pictures, but we never got there. Gerry was in hospital having had five teeth knocked out playing hockey.

He was a glutton for punishment, but the

strain was beginning to tell on me, and my infatuation was gradually wearing a bit thin. The end came with surprising and tragic suddenness, however. One Sunday afternoon I was dying to see Bob Hope's latest picture in the Plaza, but Gerry was anxious to go to Dalymount Park. He said it was a cup final, or something like that, but I was firm for once, and had my way. We went to the Plaza.

It was easily the funniest film I'd seen for years, and I laughed myself helpless, but Gerry sat there like a sulky Greek god, and dragged me out the minute it was over, muttering something like: 'I don't know what people see in that boob.'

This was a sore point with me. Insult Boob—sorry, Bob—Hope, and you insult me, too. But before I had time to think of a suitable reply we were swallowed up in an absolute stream of people returning from Dalymount Park. It must have been a fairly important game after all. Gerry asked a man: 'What was the game like?' 'Best final for years!' was the enthusiastic reply. 'Rovers won 5-4 in the last minute.' Gerry looked at me reproachfully, but said nothing.

He was very quiet for the rest of the evening, and I suspected the worst. When he saw me home—rather earlier than usual—I knew it was all over. He made no date for the following night, but mumbled something about calling me on the phone next day. But you all know the answer to that one.

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry that night. It was a wrench—he was easily the best-looking man I knew—but at least I felt, with a sigh, half of relief, half of resignation, that I could begin to live a normal life again.

SIX years flitted away, as years have a habit of doing, and I never saw or heard of Gerry. I did hear a vague rumour that he was dead, but this turned out to be only half-true.

Last Saturday I was late leaving the office, and I thought a walk home would clear away the cobwebs of the week. I hadn't walked from work for years, and I found several new housing-schemes had sprung up along the route I took—the bus goes the long way round. As I was walking up a pretty steep hill, memories of happier times made me a trifle sad, and I was haunted, as sometimes I

have been in the past, by fleeting recollections of Gerry. I stopped halfway up the hill to regain my breath, and there, looking over a low garden-wall at me, was his ghost.

He was leaning on a spade or shovel, or something like that—I was always a bit vague about gardening-tools—and he wiped the perspiration from his forehead with a grimy hand, leaving a dirty streak on his still-handsome face. My heart missed a beat.

I said he was looking straight at me, but it was obvious now that he was looking through me, and was completely unaware of my existence. His thoughts were far away, probably on some dust-covered football-field, and battles long ago. He had aged a little, but my heart gave the old familiar skip. This was my first love! 'Hallo, Gerry,' I said meekly, and he jumped.

When his eyes returned from nostalgic horizons and he focused me properly, he stared, opened his mouth wide, stuttered, and then gasped: 'Joan! . . . Joan Caulfield!'

He came to his side of the wall, and I went over to shake hands. He apologised for his appearance. 'Well, Joan,' he said in the banal way one does at such times, 'how are things?'

'Not too bad, Gerry,' I replied, trying hard to keep the slight tremor from my voice. So far the conversation had been uninspiring, and now there was an awkward pause. 'Are you married, Gerry?' I asked as casually as I could.

'Oh, yes!' he said, not exactly listlessly, but without any frightful enthusiasm.

'Who's the lucky girl?'

He hedged. 'Ah, you wouldn't know her. She . . . she used to work with me. We . . . were . . . married five years ago.'

I made a quick calculation. Not quite six years since that fateful Sunday afternoon. He hadn't wasted much time!

Another pause, and he asked: 'You married, Joan?'

'No.'

He didn't seem to know whether to look pleased or otherwise.

To change the subject, I asked: 'Still interested in football, Gerry?'

He smiled slightly for the first time. 'I could have asked you about Bob Hope,' he said. 'Still a fan?'

I nodded.

'Well, of course I'm still interested in games too,' he said. 'Naturally, when a

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fellow's married he can't get to as many matches as he used to. He hasn't the time. And then there's the . . . well, there's the garden and that . . . and there's the kids and . . . and . . .—he ended in a rush—'the wife isn't here much at week-ends, you know, and well,' he smiled self-consciously, 'someone has to mind the house and the youngsters.'

Just then two children came racing round from the back of the house. Two little boys about four and three. The smaller one was crying bitterly. My disillusionment was complete by now, but I had to admit they were lovely little kids. The elder was the image of his father. Luckily, I had some sweets in my pocket, and between us we restored order. They took the sweets shyly and returned to whatever desert island or Red Indian encampment they had left at the back of the house.

'They're not bad kids really,' said Gerry proudly, 'but they always take advantage of Saturday evenings to plague me when their mother is away. What time is it, Joan?' he asked abruptly.

I told him.

'Good!' he said. 'There's five minutes to go yet before the match starts.' He explained that Ireland and Scotland were playing at Lansdowne Road, and he was going to listen in. Though he tried valiantly to hide it, it was obvious that he would have given a lot to be there. Knowing Gerry, I could well believe it.

Our little chat petered out after that, and after a few perfunctory farewells, and a half-hearted invitation from Gerry to call over some evening, I walked on, slowly. I had plenty to think about. To relieve my feelings I concentrated on the absent wife. I worked up an intense hatred for her without any difficulty. The wretch! To go off gallivanting and leave Gerry at home minding the kids. I thought what I would have done in similar circumstances. I would have worked

my fingers to the bone for Gerry. I would have slaved for him. Certainly I would have left him his Saturday afternoons free to see his football game. The hussy!

AFTER tea I began to feel more cheerful, however, and more charitable to the errant wife. After all, I reflected, as I settled myself comfortably by the fire for the rest of the evening—one of the advantages of spinsterhood—it must be no joke to be married to a sports encyclopædia, however attractive the cover. She may very well have had an overdose of games. Probably had them for breakfast, dinner, and tea, I thought sympathetically as I turned on the radio for the news. But there was a touch of malice in my sympathy after all—it served her right for marrying a final trialist!

My watch must have been slow, because the news was nearly over. I was about to switch off when the announcer got to the sports news and I caught a reference to the game Gerry had missed. 'Ireland defeated Scotland to-day in a very exciting game at Lansdowne Road. It was probably the best match seen in Dublin for many years and the attendance set a new record. The score was Ireland 10 points (two goals): Scotland 9 points (two tries and a penalty goal).'

'Poor Gerry!' I thought sadly as I reached for the knob. He always missed the good games! If it wasn't Bob Hope, it was the gallivanting wife!

But the announcer continued: 'Ireland had a double victory to-day in the international field. At Londonbridge Road this afternoon the Irish Ladies' hockey team had a comfortable victory over Germany, 3 goals to 1. The visitors played very well, but were outclassed in the second half. The game was a personal triumph for the Irish captain and centre-forward, Mrs Gerald Whittaker, who scored the three Irish goals.'

Viewpoints

*Young boy, you sit and scheme
Your life to come—
When nursery toys
Will seem a dream
'Midst manhood's joys.*

*Old man, you sit and dream
Of days far gone—
When childhood's joys
Hid life's sad scheme
'Neath nursery toys.*

W. HERBERT GREEN.

Science at Your Service

A NOVEL READING-LAMP

A NOVEL reading-lamp is a miniature one that can be attached by light plastic prongs to the book being read. It carries a 10-watt bulb and is connected to a wall-point by a white flex. The bulb has a shade-hood to prevent the light from disturbing non-readers. Obviously the principal usefulness of this new gadget will be enjoyed by bedtime readers, though it may also find a smaller purpose in a room dimmed for television. If the book is put down, or if the reader drops off to sleep and thus causes the book to assume a horizontal position, the light automatically switches off.

A MICROMETER

As an instrument a micrometer is not in any way new, but one recently offered deserves mention because it is fairly describable as a high-quality precision appliance at a popular price. It will measure to an accuracy of one-thousandth of an inch, and is suitable for students, garage-workers, model-makers, and general handymen. The micrometer has a robust construction, and a steel adjustment-screw, sleeve, anvil, and nut ensure that its accuracy is maintained. The price is remarkably low; it would have been attractive for a precision instrument of this type even in the pre-war years.

A POURER-MEASURER

A new kitchen gadget is worth mentioning. It consists of a flask-shaped glass measure that can be fitted to a bottle and into which a $1\frac{1}{2}$ fluid oz. amount of the liquid in the main bottle can be poured. The measure attaches to the bottle by ordinary cork insertion, the flow-line for filling the measure being the glass tube passing through the cork and entering midway along the neck of the flask. The other end of the neck is open, so that, on tilting the main bottle in the opposite direction to that required for filling the flask-measure, the $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. amount can be ordinarily poured out. The open end of the neck also has a cork stopper for insertion when necessary.

ATHLETIC RECORDS AND GRAVITY

The Olympic Games of 1952 were held at Helsinki; in 1956 they will be held at Melbourne, which is about twenty-two degrees nearer the equator. Some scientists have predicted that many records will be broken in 1956 because the pull of gravity is slightly weaker near the equator. The difference is very small, detectable only by delicate instruments; however, an athlete of 200 pounds weight at the North Pole would weigh 199 pounds at the equator. Jumping, javelin and discus throwing, and pole-vaulting could be affected by this external influence. It may be very small, but the differences in performance that establish new records are often quite small themselves. It seems more likely, however, that climatic variations in different parts of the world will exercise a greater influence upon athletic performance, and this bigger variable may swamp any effects attributable to gravitational pull differences.

A DRAUGHT-EXCLUDER FOR OVERFLOW PIPES

Overflow pipe outlets from baths and cisterns are often a source of draught, particularly if they are placed on the side of the house facing the prevailing direction of cold winds. A draught-excluder for attaching to overflow pipe outlets is now being produced in several sizes. The principle is simple enough. The attachment is tubular-shaped and fits on to the overflow pipes as an outer jacket; the final fit is firmly secured by tightening a single wing-nut. The excluder carries a flap which remains close until the pressure of a flow of water lifts it. Sizes to suit standard lead, barrel, or copper piping are available. An important benefit in the winter months is the prevention of the freezing of the water surfaces of tanks and cisterns, so obviating frozen ball-cocks, resulting in empty tanks and cisterns, burst pipes, etc. Another benefit that may possibly be gained is the reduction of insect entry into the bathroom during the summer months; overflow pipes seem to be common lines of transport for crawling invaders.

A MOTOR FOR MODELS

Model makers will be interested in a new self-starting motor designed by a well-known electric-battery firm to run off 3 to 6 volts dry batteries. At maximum efficiency the motor has a capacity of .001 B.H.P. at 6000 revolutions per minute. The motor is enclosed in a cream plastic casing, with either base or end mounting or without a mounting at all. The motor weighs 1.4 ounces; it is cylindrical in shape, with a diameter of 1 inch and an overall spindle length of $1\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch. The price seems exceptionally low.

MERCURY VERSUS MOSS

Moss is a serious infestation of lawns and turf, and, on the whole, remedial treatments have been only partially successful. One reason is that there are at least thirty different species of moss, and the basic conditions that favour moss invasion vary considerably. Mosses multiply their numbers by spores or by vegetative reproduction, though in cultivated turf conditions the latter is more general; however, the arrival of air-borne spores may well be the initial cause of invasion. Mosses can often thrive better in cold winters than grasses and they are also very resistant to droughts. They can, therefore, compete vigorously with grasses at certain favourable periods and this no doubt accounts for the speed at which moss establishes itself in lawns.

Chemical methods of discouraging moss have hitherto been limited in their effectiveness. Iron sulphate dressings can provide some check; and watering with a dilute solution of potassium permanganate has also been found useful. Neither method has given more than temporary control. In recent years, however, it has been found that quite small amounts of mercury compounds will give a long-lasting control over moss, and most species seem susceptible. Calomel has been chosen as the most suitable mercury compound to use, as it is not expensive and is sufficiently low in toxicity to be classified as non-poisonous. Mercurised lawn sands for moss treatment are now available; these lawn sands in addition to containing suitable quantities of grass fertilisers contain the small amount of calomel required to bring about a lasting control over moss—about 1 gram per square yard, which is far too low a rate of dressing to be spread separately with any ease or accuracy. A single annual treatment has been found fully effective.

LEADED LIGHTS

The decorative conversion of a plain window into one with the appearance of leaded lights has been made possible by the production of lead strip for attachment to the glass surface with cement. This useful idea has been developed in several different ways. Oval-shaped strip lead, $\frac{1}{4}$ in., $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and $\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide, is available in coils 30, 50, and 36 feet long respectively, and flat strip lead, $\frac{1}{4}$ in. and $\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide, for border use, in coils 50 and 36 feet long respectively. Dear though lead is to-day, the price per coil is extremely reasonable. The cement, supplied in handy tubes, is a powerful adhesive expressly prepared to withstand all-weather conditions once applied. Special designs, 2 by $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, enabling small windows to be 'illustrated' with landscape or similar pictures are also available on the same principle as for straight-forward designs; it is suggested that this eliminates the cost of curtaining. Colouring of the glass greatly heightens the effect of the leading, especially in landscape work, and transparent enamel paint is supplied to this end in five colours—red, green, blue, amber, and frost.

A NEW GAS-COOKER

New designs in gas-cookers are frequent enough, but one with a number of unusual features has recently been placed on the market. It is 9 inches wider than the average gas-cooker for houses. The hotplate has five full-sized burners, with a circular channel around each burner, so that any liquid spilled or escaping during cooking is trapped. The grill is placed well above the hotplate and at eye-level; it has a cowl, so that fat-spluttering is minimised, but this still allows the progress of the grilling operation to be watched. The grill is centrally placed, with plate-rack facilities available on either side of it. All burners are fitted with safety locking taps. The oven has the usual two side burners and the thermostat for oven-temperature control is incorporated in the tap, thus making it impossible for the oven to be turned on without a thermostat setting. The oven-door is of the modern drop-down type, with a chromium bar handle. The small space underneath is occupied by a shallow storage-drawer. A four-hour timer is built into the hotplate front, but this is hinged and can be lifted and prop-supported while the burners are being cleaned. Two models are initially available, in grey and white, and in cream and blue-green.

SCIENCE AT YOUR SERVICE

A 'PEN' FOR STICKING

A new pen-shaped applicator containing a quick-stick glue may find many uses in the office or home. The glue is dispensed on the piston-valve principle; when the delivery end of the 'pen' is tapped or pressed, a dot of glue is released on the base surface to which attachment is desired. Papers, photographs, labels, or cuttings, etc., can be instantly stuck down. Each glue refill for the 'pen' is said to provide about five thousand dots of glue. If a dot of glue is placed in a wrong position, it can be cleanly wiped off. The instrument is claimed to be leak-proof, and the glue held will not clog, dry up, or adhere to the fingers.

AN ANT-KILLER

A new ant-killing product is on the market. In the strictest accuracy, it is not new, for it had begun to be sold here before the war, but the active ingredient was a natural substance derived from the roots of a Japanese tree; supplies have not been available since then. It is claimed that this substance is so specifically toxic to ants that an entire colony of ants will be destroyed even if only a few ants eat it; on the other hand, it is harmless to plants and animals. Its toxic potency is lost by exposure to rainfall; however, this is not a serious disability, for the ant-killer, a liquid packed in bottles, is used at a low rate, only a few drops being sprinkled at any one time. After rain has fallen it is not particularly troublesome or costly to repeat the treatment. It is stated that the product can be safely used indoors as well as out of doors. The Far East seems to be a particularly fertile part of the world for the production and development of natural insecticides; derris is also a toxic extract of Japanese plant roots. Gardeners troubled with ant nests should welcome this addition to their armoury, or should at any rate investigate its potentialities, for, on the whole, ant-killing substances have been neither numerous nor particularly sure in their effects; some of the chemicals recommended as ant repellents have been fairly unpleasant materials to handle.

THE HEAT-PUMP BEGINS

It is not wholly true, of course, to talk of the heat-pump beginning. This system of heating—based upon taking heat from one place and applying it to warm another place—has been developing for some years. But for many people the real beginning is when commercial appliances are actually on the ordinary market. An English company is now offering a domestic heat-pump appliance that will extract heat from the larder and use it to warm water in a hot-water tank. This seems at first to be a summertime-only application of the heat-pump principle, but there is always removable heat in the air flowing through a larder or pantry. Sited in the corner of a larder, the appliance will quickly cool the whole space and maintain an air temperature of about 40° Fahr. The heat taken from the air is utilised to heat the water in a 30-gallons copper cylinder, and after about four hours of steady operation the water temperature will reach 140° Fahr. and thereafter be maintained at this level. The cylinder is enclosed within the appliance. One consequence of this application of the heat-pump principle is that the larder concerned must be fairly spacious.

The cylinder is contained in a rust-proofed and stove-enamelled outer steel casing, and the space (approximately 3 inches in width) between the cylinder and the casing is packed with granulated cork for insulation. Above the cylinder there is an ice-box, with two ice-trays and room for milk-bottles, etc. Heat-pumps work on the same heat-transference principles as refrigerators, of course, so it is not difficult to include ice-making as an auxiliary function. This cabinet has one hinged door, with ball-catches for closing.

The price compares not unreasonably with that of larger domestic refrigerators. A spacious larder, whose air temperature is maintained at 40° Fahr., is virtually converted into a refrigerator; and hot-water supply is adequate for the average household. Incidentally, an immersion-heater may be fitted in the cylinder to fortify the water-heating when large quantities are required very quickly.

TO CORRESPONDENTS who wish fuller information regarding new inventions, publications, etc. mentioned here, addresses will be furnished, when possible, if (and only if) a stamped addressed envelope or postcard for a reply be sent to the Editor, *Chambers's Journal*, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh. To avoid delays, requests of this kind from correspondents abroad will be forwarded to the manufacturer or agent if stamps, postal orders, or imperial or international reply coupons are enclosed for the purpose. The issue of the *Journal* and the heading of the paragraph in which the object of inquiry is described should be given in order to facilitate reference.

A Gardening Christmas

I SUPPOSE there is nothing more practical or enduring than a gardening present. Many nurserymen realise this, of course, because they offer plant tokens. There is a little heather garden that trickles down from the top terrace of my home which always reminds me of a very charming giver, for it started with some plants from Balmoral. There are three beautiful plum-trees, called Wealden Ruby, which bear luscious crimson fruits each year at the bottom of my orchard, and I am reminded always of the giver, who is now no more.

In some gardens almost everywhere one walks there are treasures which have come as presents. What could be better than a gift of one of the new family fruit-trees. These seem to be the answer to almost every problem. So often a lonely apple or pear fails to fruit because it has not got the necessary pollinator near by. The family tree has its pollinators grafted on to it already. How unfortunate it is to have all one's apples in September—and then to have nothing to eat for Christmas. The family tree ensures that you are eating delicious apples from August to January. These family trees are grafted with five different varieties. They are raised by a leading wholesaler, and they are sold to-day by most good nurserymen, but if you have any difficulty in getting them, you must let me know.

Tree A caters for those who want cooking-apples throughout the season. The one tree bears Grenadier, Arthur Turner, Lord Derby, Bramley Seedling, and Howgate Wonder. Those who prefer eating-apples will buy tree B, which bears Epicure, Worcester Pearmain, Fortune, Ellison's Orange, and Cox's Orange Pippin. Thus you get fruit from August to January. Those who care for pears should buy tree C, which is grafted with Laxton's Superb, William's Bon Chrétien, Conference, Packham's Triumph, and Doyenne du Comice.

Those who prefer early and second-early eating-apples will buy tree E, which is grafted with Epicure, Worcester Pearmain, Fortune, Merton Worcester, and Ellison's Orange.

Others, again, will prefer tree F, because this bears three eating-apples and two cooking-apples, giving fruit throughout the season; the varieties concerned are Epicure, Grenadier, Worcester, Cox's Orange, and Howgate Wonder. Just think of it—you have only got to plant one tree in your garden to have this wonderful selection of apples. Imagine the delight you would give to someone if you sent a family tree for Christmas. It will cost you only £2, plus a certain amount for carriage and packing.

Just a word or two about the tree. It is possible to obtain a leaflet with each gift. This will give full instructions as to the care which has to be taken to make certain that the tree crops fairly heavily and that each variety gives of its best. It is possible, for instance, to check the excessive vigour of any particular kind by light bark-ringing, which means the cutting out of a quarter of an inch of bark right down to the hard sap wood at a point some inches below the point of grafting. This is best done during the month of May.

In cases where the side-shoots seem slow in coming into bearing, they can be pulled down by tying a soft piece of string to the shoot and then tying the other end of the string to the stem of the tree. This is sometimes known as branch-festooning, and it does cause the early formation of fruit-buds. Do not, however, allow the trees to bear fruit after their first year of transplanting, because any specimen needs all its energy, apart from fruit-bearing, if it is to become established in its new surroundings. Any young fruits that form in the first season should, therefore, be cut off with a pair of scissors.

The tree should be sprayed each winter with a tar distillate wash, using a 5 per cent solution. A thorough soaking should be given, so that the trunk and the branches are covered from top to toe.

I shall be glad to help readers with their gardening problems. Write to me through the Editor, kindly enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the reply.

W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER, M.B.E., N.D.H.

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